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# TARIKH BADSHAH BEGAM

*(A Persian manuscript on the History of Oudh)*

TRANSLATED BY

MUHAMMAD TAQI AHMAD, M.A., L.T.

WITH A FOREWORD BY

SIR JADUNATH SARKAR

THE INDIAN PRESS, LTD.,  
ALLAHABAD

1938

Printed and published by  
K. Mitra, at The Indian Press, Ltd.,  
A L L A H A B A D.

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## EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

The translator feels particularly indebted to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, C.I.E., Hony. D.Litt., Hony. Member, Royal Asiatic Society and Corresponding Member, Royal Historical Society and to Prof. R. R. Srishta, M.A., LL.B. (Cantab.), for their kind help.



## FOREWORD

The Begams of Oudh have left an abiding mark on Indian history. Two of the earliest of them, namely, Nawab Begam Sadr-un-nisa,—the imperious daughter of one Nawab, wife of another and mother of a third—and Bahu Begam, the petted foster-child of an Emperor of Delhi, ended their days as the heroines of a tragic story which, when told by “the English Hyperides,” drew tears in Westminster Hall beyond the black waters. Towards the close of the dynasty came Padishah Begam, the spirited wife of the imbecile Ghazi-ud din Haider, and Hazrat Mahal, the Judith of the Sepoy Mutiny, the even more heroic consort of the still softer Wajid Ali Shah.

Three of these royal ladies of Oudh are already known to English readers. But Padishah Begam had hitherto unveiled her character to the historian for a moment only, when she made the futile *coup* in favour of Munna Jan (1837), which Sleeman has described so graphically in his *Journey Through the Kingdom of Oudh*, ii. 153—182. Mr. Muhammad Taqi Ahmad has, therefore, done a great service to Oudh history by unearthing and translating a contemporary biography of this queen, written by a man who had access to her household and the British Residency alike. This account from the pen of an Indian eyewitness corroborates the narrative of Sleeman in most of its details.

But the chief value of this biography lies in its vivid portraiture of the character and household of “an Eastern Queen” of the same city but one

generation earlier than the heroine of Dr. Knighton's book. It is shorter, no doubt, than the latter work, but also free from the excess of rather jejune details which swell *Elihu Jan's Story*.

The present book makes an even wider appeal in that it illustrates a phase in the development of Shiaism in India known to few of us before. The learned writer of the article on this subject in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. iv, pp. 350—358, has drawn attention to the strong element of anthropo-morphism in this creed (which conflicts with the philosophy of orthodox Islam), and has clearly hinted how “the Passion and divine Epiphany motives” have contributed to its growth on lines divergent from the course of Islamic belief in Arabia. This root cause explains what may appear to the modern reader as Padishah Begam's religious vagaries in the following very interesting pages. I trust this is only the beginning of Mr. Taqi Ahmad's contribution to the original materials of Oudh history. He has collected a number of valuable and rare works bearing on the history of Oudh during the Nawabi, including the counter-blast against Dalhousie published in London in 1854 and Wajid Ali Shah's agent Masihuddin Khan's Vindication of Oudh and its Government. The latter was suppressed just after its publication in 1856 in London. But it supplied materials for “Dacoity in Excelsis or the Spoliation of Oudh.” In the interests of history these rare works should be acquired and preserved by some public institution.

15th June, 1938.

JADUNATH SARKAR.

## INTRODUCTION

I have undertaken the translation of this Persian manuscript (Tarikh Badshah Begam) which I found among the private Collections of the late Maharaja of Balrampur, only to save a valuable work on the History of Oudh from perishing. Few efforts have so far been made to write the History of Oudh, although the subject is one which should have rightly claimed our first attention. We are today just where we were in 1885, when Dr. Hoey, the translator of a similar work on the subject, observed, "The History of Oudh has never been written. We have a few sketches by English hands and we have some brief epitomes in the Vernacular, but we have nothing which can be called history."

Since then many valuable manuscripts have perished and some that do exist even now are so scattered that they are soon likely to perish unnoticed. The humble efforts that I have been making for a number of years in collecting such records convince me of their immense value, which Hoey himself realised when he said, "We must draw information from native sources . . . That such authorities do exist is beyond doubt. The thing is to find them." Having found one such work, I translated it in order to stimulate and encourage further investigation and research.

The historical value of this work lies in its being a contemporary record of events mostly witnessed by the author himself who lived at the Capital

(Lucknow). His good relations with Lieut. J. D. Shakespear, the second assistant to the Resident, at whose suggestion he undertook the work, qualified him more than other Contemporary Indian writers who had access only to the Nawab's court and could not, therefore, see both sides of the question. The author of *Qaisarul Tawarikh* (the one full history of Oudh in any language), himself a contemporary of the later Oudh kings, Ghazi Uddin Hyder and his successors, consulted this work which clearly shows that it was recognised to be authentic. Besides, the story it relates corresponds in details to the information obtained piecemeal from the 'Oudh Papers,' Sleeman's 'Journey through the kingdom of Oudh' and indigenous records.

Apart from its value for students of history, the narrative is so interestingly told that it is likely to absorb the attention of even a cursory reader. The work, the life-story of Badshah Begam, the chief wife of Ghazi Uddin Hyder, the ruler of Oudh (1814—27) has some unusually interesting features. It is practically the full history of the period of Oudh rule beginning with the accession of Ghazi Uddin Hyder (1814) and ending with the death of his son Naseer Uddin Hyder and the accession of Muhammad Ali Shah (1837). The exhaustive treatment that it gives to the most important event of the period, the *coup d'état* of Munna Jan, which was the last and the most daring exploit of the Begam, places it among the few primary authorities on the subject. Then, not only does it fully describe all the political activities of the Begam, thus throwing immense light on the important subject

of 'the influence of women in the state,' but it even deals with the social and religious customs of the Harem, a subject so interesting still so much shunned by historians of Muslim India.

It is perhaps one of the few biographies of royal ladies that have been attempted in Persian. Even the powerful Moghal ladies, Nur Jehan, Jehan Ara and Roshan Ara had no biographers. Why then did Badshah Begam have one, we might reasonably ask. It might be due to the western influence which had by this time partly modified our ideals of female secrecy and softened their rigidity or to the biographer's antipathy, who, no friend or even a sparing critic of the Begam, wrote in order to ridicule her ambitious projects. Whatever might have been the motive for writing, the Begam was undoubtedly a lady of no meek spirit who would keep her prodigious powers unused or checked. Capt. White, the author of "The Murdered King of Oudh" calls her an 'illustrious lady' and 'one of the most wonderful women in the world.' Whether her influence was baneful or salutary for the State is a point on which there must be difference of opinion, but none will deny that Badshah Begam possessed more courage than most ladies of her day had.

It may be a pardonable digression to quote here an interesting passage from Knighton's "An Eastern King," giving us a picture of the typical ladies of the time. "The ladies regard men as a superior order of beings," says he, "listen to their views as the child listens to those of its parents, adopt their views and embrace their opinions with unhesitating confidence

that bespeaks child-like simplicity and implicit faith." Badshah Begam was too high-spirited to imbibe such a slavish mentality. Further describing the connubial relations in the royal household, the same author says, "Each of the king's wives had her own harem . . . she might not see her husband once a month, yet she was still a wife and a queen. The slave might be the favoured mistress and the queen the neglected wife." Such a relationship was intolerable to a woman of Badshah Begam's temperament. She might be judged too ambitious or self-willed, but was not the position of women so unsatisfactory in her days that a high-spirited lady was likely to become perverse.

It is, therefore, no apology to say that Badshah Begam must have made a better use of her prodigious powers if she had seen better days. One who could make and unmake ministers, fight against kings and lead an army to place her own candidate on the throne, could as well use her wonderful gifts, indomitable courage and tenacity, more usefully, only if times had been different. Let us not, therefore, place blind faith in her biographer's partial and unsympathetic estimate, for his sympathies were naturally with the Begam's enemies, as his own patron Lieut. Shakespear had played an important part against her in the *coup de'état*.

Turning next to Munna Jan's right of succession and his doubtful parentage, a subject which has been very thoroughly treated in this work, it may be noted that the point of view adopted by the author is that of the English. No doubt, the data supplied by him leads to the sure conclusion that Munna Jan was not

of royal blood and hence had no right to the throne. But this, I fear, ignores the other side of the question.

In his work, "A Journey through the Kingdom of Oudh," Col. Sleeman, the Resident at Lucknow, twelve years after the *coup d'etat* had taken place, supported Munna Jan's claim. It is worth noting that Sleeman enjoyed fine opportunities of forming a disinterested opinion after the heat of controversy had subsided and that a responsible English officer like Col. Sleeman could never have differed from his predecessors in office (Col. Low and Lieut. Shakespear) on such an important matter, unless he had sufficient reasons to do so. Because the argument he advances is of immense value in support of the young pretender's claims, I may quote a few short passages from his work.

"A good many of the members of the royal family," says Col. Sleeman, "who had been brought up from childhood with the deceased king Naseer-od-Deen Hyder, and near his person to the last, declare that Munna Jan was his son."

Further on he remarks, "The assertion on the part of the late king that he ceased to cohabit with Afzal Mahal, the mother of Munna Jan . . . . was utterly false . . . . Afzal Mahal, though of humble birth and pretensions, maintained a fair reputation among those who knew her best in a profligate palace and has continued to maintain the same up to the present day in adversity. In prison and up to the hour of her death . . . (Badshah Begam) declared that she had seen the boy born . . . . and that the story was got up to prevent her being

ever reconciled to the king through the means of his son; and 'her extraordinary affection for him never diminished . . . ." Then, Sleeman further observes, "The boy was remarkably like Naseer-od-Deen in form and features, as well as in temper and disposition."

Considering the value of these remarks, it does not look advisable to place blind confidence in the mass of arguments heaped by the author of this work. We should, therefore, carefully weigh both sides before we form a final opinion. The "Papers on Oude" give us ample material on this subject, although the information contained therein is virtually the same as supplied in this work, still it is one of the few published records on the History of Oudh and must be consulted to avoid error of judgement.

The translation, I must confess, has been far from literal. In spite of his professions to write a simple, unadorned language, our author did not abstain from the use of meaningless synonyms, unnecessary adjuncts and useless repetition which I had to leave out in translation. I was prompted by the desire to produce a simple and readable narrative, just to popularise the History of Oudh and did not like to make a fruitless attempt to produce a well-worded literal translation.

LUCKNOW :

*15th June, 1938.*

MUHAMMAD TAQI AHMAD.



**Tarikh Badshah Begam**



## TARIKH BADSHAH BEGAM

. . . . in the course of a conversation about the aristocracy past and present, Lieut. John Dowdeswell Shakespear\* (second assistant to Col. John Low†, the Company's representative at the Court of Oudh), who had an Englishman's taste for history, suggested that one of the servants of Badshah Begam might write a biography of the Begam, with an account of the recent happenings connected with her life. Accordingly, I, Abdul Ahad‡, son of the late Muhammad Faiq, set

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\* John Dowdeswell Shakespear—He was the eldest son of John Talbot Shakespear of the Bengal Civil Service. The famous novelist, Thackeray was his first cousin and in Colonel Newcome he embodied some traits in his character. His sister Augusta was married to Col. Low, the Resident at Lucknow, under whom he himself served as Second Assistant. He played a very important part in the events that followed the death of Naseeruddin Hyder, the king of Oudh, in the night of July 7 and the morning of July 8, 1838 at the palace of the king at Lucknow, fully described later in the chapters relating to the event.

† John Low (1788—1880)—He was educated at St. Andrews University and in 1804 he obtained a Madras cadetship. In his early years he saw varied service. He was present at the famous defeat of the Mahrattas at Mahidpur. In 1831 he was sent as Resident to Lucknow and in 1837 he placed Naseeruddaulah afterwards styled Muhammad Ali Shah on the throne of Oudh and thus defeated Badshah Begam in her attempt to place a pretender on the throne. In recognition of his services he was made a C. B. (1838). Later he was made a K.C.B. and then a G.C.S.I.

‡ Abdul Ahad, son of Muhammad Faiq, was a resident of Amethi, a place near Lucknow. His father taught him Persian and he took his lessons in Arabic at Farangi Mahel, Lucknow. He was a Sarishtedar in the office of the Resident at Lucknow. He was a good poet and a fine prose writer. He died at Amethi in 1268 A.H. (1851).

about the task. I have put in twelve years' service under the Company and Lieut. Shakespear has always been kind to me. I made a thorough investigation of the facts from the beginning to the end, tested their veracity and put them in writing. I named the book "Waqaae Dilpizir,"<sup>1</sup> a word which added to the author's name gives the date of the compilation. I have, contrary to the common practice, abstained from the use of allegorical language, so that there might be no doubts about the true import of the words and no uncertainty about their meaning. Still, if there are any mistakes, I pray that the wise may forgive.

*Quatrain.* I pray to God that by His mercy, this work which was completed in the year one thousand two hundred and fifty-three may meet with general approval.

**Introduction.** *The account of the marriage of Abul Mazaffar Muizz Uddin Shah-i-Zaman Ghazi Uddin Hyder, king of Oudh, and Badshah Begam, together with other events relating to them.*

In Asafuddaulah's time, Saadat Ali Khan did not consider it advisable to stay at Lucknow because he had failed in his plans.<sup>2</sup> He left Lucknow, went to Shahjahanabad and then to Benares. Mubashshir Khan Munajjamul Mulk (an almanographer), son of

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<sup>1</sup> By the 'Abjad' method of calculating, 'WAQAAE DILPIZIR ABDUL AHAD' gives 1253 A.H. the date of the compilation of the work.

<sup>2</sup> Saadat Ali Khan stayed for a year at Lucknow (1775-76) and conspired with Basant, the murderer of Mukhtar-uddaulah, Asafuddaulah's Naib. Of the three contemporary chroniclers the author of the 'Imadussaadat' takes no notice of Saadat's designs and even absolves him of complicity, while the two others, the authors of the 'Siyarul Muta-

Musharraff Khan, one of the best pupils of Khairullah, the officer-in-charge of Muhammad Shah's observatory, visited Benares while Saadat Ali Khan was staying there. Among Mubashshir Khan's children there was a daughter named Badshah Begam whom he loved more than his other children. He gave her a good training in the theory and practice of the science of

khirin' and the 'Tafzihul Ghafilin' definitely say that Saadat Ali Khan took part in the conspiracy which aimed at putting an end to the lives of Asafuddaulah and Mukhtaruddaulah and placing him (Saadat Ali Khan) and Basant in their places respectively.

To quote from the above-mentioned chronicles:—

(1) Imadussaadat—

تفضل حسین خان علامہ..... بحضور آقائے خوش آمدہ  
سکن بہ کرسی تقریر جاداد انجناب (ذواب یمین الدولہ)  
فرمود کہ مرا چہ ضرور کہ دست گرفته غلام (بسنّت) گفتہ شوم  
تا خدا نکوآہد ہیچ نمی شود -

(2) Siyarul Mutakhirin—

بسنّت خواجہ سرائے مذکور کہ بہ جرنیلی مشہور بود  
باطناً با مرزا سعادت علی ہم سازشے کرد کہ ہر گاہ من  
مختارالدولہ را تمام کنم شما علی الفور با چند کسے کہ دارید  
سوار شدہ حاضر آیند من او را کشتہ حضور آصف الدولہ  
خواہم رفت در گرمی کار او ہم باتمام رسانیدہ شمار ابرو سادہ  
ایالت خواہم نشانید -

(3) Tafzihul Ghafilin (translated by Hoey)—

“ . . . Mirza Saadat . . . acting on the suggestion of Tafazzul Husen Khan . . . began a conspiracy with Basant.

After a good deal of negotiation it was settled that Basant should put Asafuddaulah and Mukhtaruddaulah out of the way, that Saadat Ali should succeed his brother and Basant should become his minister of war and finance.”

astronomy. Saadat Ali Khan knew that Munajjamul Mulk was a Rizvi Syed whose family came from Mashhed and enjoyed a high social status. He proposed to him to give his daughter in marriage to his son (Ghazi Uddin Hyder) and perform the 'dola' ceremony according to the Indian custom. But Munajjamul Mulk refused the offer as he considered such a connection to be below the position of his family. To avoid an open refusal, he said that he could give his consent, only if the ceremony was performed according to the custom prevalent in the houses of the nobility.

The Nawab consented, and in the year 1209 A.H. (1794-'95), married her with all the pomp to his eldest son who succeeded to the throne as Abul Muzaffar Muizz Uddin Shah Zaman Ghazi Uddin Hyder Shah,<sup>3</sup> Badshah Ghazi.

Not long after the marriage, a daughter named Poti Begam was born, who was afterwards married to Nawab Ali Mehdi Khan of Top Darvaza. A son and two daughters were born of this couple (*Ali Mehdi and Poti Begam*). The son named Muhsanuddaulah was married to the daughter of Muhammad Ali Shah, the present king of Oudh. The two daughters, Wazir Begam and Haji Begam, were married to the sons of Abu Talib Khan and have died.

Not long after Badshah Begam's marriage, Ghazi Uddin Hyder took a fancy for one of his wife's maid-servants named Subh Daulat. She became pregnant. Badshah Begam soon learnt of this and

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<sup>3</sup> Ghazi Uddin Hyder came to the throne in 1814 A.D.

was beside herself with rage and jealousy. When the child was born (twenty-second of Jamadul Awal 1218 A.H.), the Begam was furiously excited and got Subh Daulat, the mother of the new-born child, killed with unsurpassable cruelty. She was buried in the country graveyard of Jhankar Bagh which was meant for the poor only. Naseer Uddin Hyder (*the child who afterwards became the king of Oudh*) built a tomb over her. After killing the mother, the Begam proposed to kill the child, but Faiz-un-nisa<sup>4</sup>, the aunt of Mir Fazal Ali<sup>5</sup>, the chief steward of the Begam's household, expostulated with her and kept her back from committing such a heinous crime.

The child was afterwards named Naseer Uddin Hyder. The Begam soon became fond of him and brought him up with such care that she is believed to have set an unprecedented example of motherly love for step-children.

Mubashshir Khan, the Begam's father, retired from active life. Every year he prepared the new Almanac, presented it to the nobles and to the rich, who awarded him great or small sums ranging from Rs. 5 to Rs. 5000 in return. This was Mubashshir Khan's means of livelihood.

*Couplet.* Do not desire anything but contentment if you want to be wealthy, for this is real wealth.

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<sup>4</sup> Faizunnisa was Badshah Begam's factotum.

<sup>5</sup> After Agha Mir's dismissal in 1827, Mir Fazal Ali, at the suggestions of Badshah Begam, was made the 'Naib' or minister. He died a few days after he had incurred the king's displeasure in 1829.

Be it known that although the Begam was very punctilious about religious observances and formalities she was very fond of introducing innovations in religion. Besides, she was very hot-tempered, unruly and ambitious. To depict her true character, one should mention the fact that the fury of her anger was so violent that her husband (*Ghazi Uddin Hyder*) had to submit to her will for fear, and, when he could no longer bear this, he was at last constrained to separate. Her love for grandeur and self-aggrandisement was so extreme that she could only be satisfied with keeping the whole state in her hands.

I shall deal first with the innovations she introduced and later with other traits of her character.

The first innovation she introduced in religion was the celebration of the 'Chhati' ceremony of Imam Mehdi. This ceremony is celebrated in India on the sixth day after the birth of a child, when both the mother and the child take a bath. All the relations of the family are invited, music parties and dinners are arranged and the child and the mother are clad in rich, costly and new apparel. The Begam innovated the 'Chhati' ceremony of the Imam, thus connecting the Indian custom with his birth.

She celebrated it every year in the month of Shaban. Large sums of money were spent and the Begam scrupulously watched the completion of every item of the programme lest there should be any mistake or omission. The second innovation was that handsome Syed girls were brought to the palace, kept



there and called the wives of the Eleven Imams.\* Large sums were paid to their parents if they willingly offered them; if not, other means for acquiring them were resorted to. Each one bore the name of the wife of one of the Imams out of eleven, the names being searched out and studied from works of Islamic history. They were all called "Achhooti," a word which in Hindi means something too pure and sacred to be polluted by touch. The word has been in use among Indian ladies.

But because of the unusual respect in which Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Fatma," as members of the prophet's own household, are held, they were not represented by these mimic personalities.

Every "Achhooti" had three female attendants. In the morning when the Begam got up from the bed, she was particular that the first thing, she should look at, must be the face of one of the "Achhootis," for she regarded catching a sight of their face first as a happy omen.

She had a great regard for them, and when she was face to face with one of these, she always bowed. She gave them the most costly apparel and the most delicious food and provided them with all that they desired.

The Begam, however, did not favour their marriage. If one of them reached the age of puberty and was inclined to marry, she pointed out to her that it was sacrilegious to take another husband after one

\* Refer to footnote 7 on p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Hazrat Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, and Hazrat Ali, her husband, are most highly revered by the Muslims.

had dedicated her life to such a sacred cause. Naturally some of them earnestly desired marrying and were put to great inconvenience as they were disallowed.

One of these who was agitated with passion played a fine trick one night. She got up from the bed and began wailing and weeping most bitterly. This woke up all the other ladies in the palace who hastened to the Begam to communicate the sad news. She (the Begam) got up and hastened to make a personal enquiry. The cheat told her that in sound sleep she had dreamt of the Imam who looked angry and said to her that he had divorced her. This had perturbed her, and in her distress she rose lamenting the great loss she had sustained because such an unfortunate bereavement amounted to her total ruin. The Begam sent her in a palanquin, with all the valuables she possessed to her father's house.

The third is the custom of "Achhootas." This is also an innovation. 'Achhoota' in Hindustani means one who is too pure and holy to be touched or polluted. The difference between the "Achhoota" and "Achhooti" is one of sex, the one being the masculine and the other the feminine. "Achhooti" is the feminine because (ع) in Hindustani is the distinguishing mark of the feminine gender. 'Achhoota' like 'Achhooti' is a word common among the Indian ladies.

As I knew little more about the 'Achhoota,' except that this was a practice in the royal palace, I enquired from the chief attendants who told me that the Begam had set apart a room in the palace for the

Imams and nobody was allowed to enter it. On the day of the birth of each of the Imams, the room was richly decorated and exquisitely lighted.

She herself showed every mark of respect, made a most lowly obeisance and presented the “nazar” (gift of money). She gave away the costly apparel and jewellery to the lady supposed to be the wife of the Imam and distributed the articles of furniture in the room among the maid-servants.

She had built, in the palace, one tomb for each of the twelve Imams with one small mosque attached to each. These tombs were called the Rauza-e-Dowazdah Imam, *i.e.*, the tombs of the twelve Imams.<sup>7</sup> Inside every tomb there was a “Zarih,” an imitation of the actual tomb of the Imam and some sacred relics. Apart from these, there was another building constructed in imitation of the tomb of Hazrat Abbas.<sup>8</sup>

The Begam spent days and nights in prayer and worship, she spent large sums in ‘Fatiha’ and ‘Darood’ and mourning ceremonies every year on the day the death of each of the Imams had occurred and regarded these irreligious observances the cause of her worldly and spiritual betterment.

The fourth was that she believed the King of the genii descended on her. On such occasions, she

<sup>7</sup> The Twelve Imams are:—

Hazrat Ali; Imam Hasan; Imam Husain; Imam Zainul Abidin; Imam Muhammad Baqar; Imam Jafar Sadiq; Imam Musi Kazim; Imam Ali Musi Raza; Imam Muhammad Taqi; Imam Muhammad Naqi; Imam Hasan Askari; Imam Mehdi.

<sup>8</sup> Abbas, son of Ali, accompanied Imam Husain to Karbala and died there fighting heroically for the Imam in 679 A.D. (60 A.H.).

put on the richest apparel and ornaments, used the finest perfumes and sat on a throne with perfect cleanliness. She was surrounded by female musicians who would sing while she herself moved her head like one enchanted. While in such a mood, she would give answers to the queries about the past and the future made by those who were present there. May God save us from Satan!

As Mirza Naseer Uddin Hyder, the King of Oudh, was brought up under the care of the Begam, he was more careful about these practices than about the five cardinal Islamic duties (فرائض خمسة).<sup>9</sup> So long as the mother and the son (Badshah Begam and Naseer Uddin Hyder) were on good terms, few except the very select ones knew how far Naseer Uddin Hyder himself believed in them. It was generally thought that he practised them just to please the Begam's fancy. But, after the differences arose, the King could no more keep his beliefs a secret and he showed a very keen interest in these observances. Far from reducing their number or omitting a single one, he added some more which he himself innovated. Thus the pupil went ahead of the teacher. Like Badshah Begam, he also nominated ladies as the supposed wives

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<sup>9</sup> (فرائض خمسة) This refers to Namaz (prayer), Roza (fast), Jihad (religious war), Haj (pilgrimage), and Zakat (alms). It may even mean Namaz, Roza, Haj, Zakat and reading the 'Kalma Shahadat,' according to the following saying of the Prophet:—

بنی الاسلام 'علي خمس شهادة ان لا اله الا الله و ان  
محمد الرسول الله واقام الصلوة وايتاء الزكاة وصوم شهر رمضان  
وحج البيت من استطاع اليه سبيلا -

of the Eleven Imams out of twelve and of the great religious personalities such as Hazrat Qasim<sup>10</sup> and Hazrat 'Abbas. On the day of the birth of each of the Imams he would behave like a woman in childbed and pretend that he was suffering from the pains of childbirth. A doll studded with jewels was kept lying in the King's lap to represent the false child. The selected attendants prepared dishes used by women in childbed and served them to the king. Nobody was allowed to touch him while he was in this false confinement. On the sixth day the king would take a bath, customary for women in childbed. Then one of the maid-servants would take the false child in one corner and keep him standing, while another poured a few jars of water on him. This was how the false ceremony of the customary bath was performed.

The night following, the king would put on a magnificent female suit, go out in the open space inside the palace with the child in his lap and have the ceremony of Sitara-bini<sup>11</sup> performed. After these ceremonies were over, the false child was kept in a magnificent bed studded with jewels and the 'nazar' (gift of money) was presented before him with every mark of respect. After this, countless dishes of food and confectionery of the various tastes and qualities

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<sup>10</sup> Qasim, son of Imam Hasan, died at Karbala in 679 A.D. (60 A.H.) fighting with his uncle Imam Husain. He was in the full bloom of youth and his death was therefore most shocking to the helpless and tyrannised family of the Imam.

<sup>11</sup> This is a ceremony observed after the Chhati in Muslim families. The mother is dressed in costly and rich apparel. Then the Koran is placed on her head and she is taken out to look at the stars.

were brought which were distributed among the select persons, particularly the chief lady-attendants after the 'Fatiha' was read.

But, for the ladies supposed to be the wives of the Eleven Imams, there were gold dolls and for those of other religious guides there were silver ones. This distinction was compatible with the respect they are held in as religious heads. On the occasion of the birthday of other children in the Imam's family than the Imams themselves, the ladies played the same part, that is, it was they and not the king who on such occasions pretended to be the mother.

On the day the period of confinement was over, the king, dressed in rich female costumes, would go round the city in a richly decorated palanquin, followed by a grand and pompous procession and trays containing the most delicious confectionery. There was no fixed period of confinement. It extended over a week, a period of ten days or sometimes more.

This sacrilegious custom grew so common that some women in the city were called 'Achhootis' and were classed as such. The men in their families had given up manly habits, talked and behaved like women and had adopted female costumes. The dates of the marriage of the Imams were searched out from works on Islamic history and the 'Sachaq'<sup>12</sup> and 'Hina-Bandi'<sup>13</sup> ceremonies were performed. One of the chief

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<sup>12</sup> A day before the marriage ceremony is observed, some presents, the bridal robe and sweetmeat, are sent from the bridegroom's to the bride's place.

<sup>13</sup> This is a ceremony connected with marriage. It is observed a day before the 'Sachaq.'

female attendants informed me that on the First of Muharram, the date of the marriage of Hazrat Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, two life-like figures representing her husband Hazrat Ali and herself were kept on a richly embroidered bed. After the customary Nikah ceremony was performed, the Nazar was presented and people kept standing for some time as a mark of respect. After this, they brought the best varieties of food and confectionery which were distributed among the female attendants after the 'Fatiha' was read. My hair stands on end from fear of God when I notice these sacrileges, but none could venture to express any opinions against these, for fear of disrespect to the king.

The king himself following the Begam's example constructed close to the new habitation (Farah-Bakhsh<sup>14</sup>) twelve tombs in imitation of those of the Imams with one small mosque where the sacred relics of the 'Zarih' were deposited, attached to each. There was also an imitation in iron of the tomb of Hazrat Abbas. The tombs built by the king were better furnished and more elaborately decorated than those of the Begam, for he considered that this would add to his betterment.

Mir Ehsan Ali, the Marsiah-go, who lived in the days of Yaminuddaulah Saadat Ali Khan, had extended the period of Muharram mourning up to the Chahallum, the 20th of Safar, though previously the

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<sup>14</sup> Farah Bakhsh was the royal residence of the kings of Oudh. It was originally built by General Martin. Saadat Ali Khan after a dangerous illness occupied it temporarily for a change of air. After recovery he bought it and gave the name Farah Bakhsh, the Delight-giving Palace.

practice was to observe it only up to the 10th of Muharram. According to the new practice, the Tazias were buried on the former date (20th of Safar).

The Begam in the first year of Naseer Uddin Hyder's accession had it proclaimed that the mourning period was thenceforth to be observed up to the Chahallum and that no marriages or amusement parties were to be held within the period of mourning and that a breach of this order would excite the king's wrath and invite punishment. As this order was detrimental to the public interest, the Rèsident intervened and after much difficulty the king was persuaded to revoke the royal decree declaring that his subjects were at liberty to do what best suited their interests but that personally he would abide by his pledge to God and observe the Muharram mournings up to the Chahallum.

To be brief, the evil effects of the training given by the Begam were that he spent the whole of his life in these practices and had little leisure to devote himself to the political and financial affairs of the kingdom. As a result of the neglect of kingly duties, the state officials misappropriated the state revenues and spent the money on their own expenses. Such were the evil effects of the bad training which resulted in the ruin of the state.

A full account of the tyranny to which people were subjected, as a result of the king's neglect of duties and of official high-handedness, is hardly possible. Immense wealth in cash and kind, stolen by state servants, like Agha Mirza Koka and Daljit Singh Khawas, has been confiscated and brought out



of their houses in the time of the present sovereign. If those two could lay hand on such vast sums, what can be said of others who were entrusted with high functions and held higher offices?

After the death of Naseer Uddin Hyder and the ruin of the Begam's affairs, the ' Achhootis,' however, got full freedom. They came out, married and were at liberty to enjoy life.

THE DEATH OF YAMINUDDAULAH SAADAT  
ALI KHAN AND THE ACCESSION OF  
RAFAATUDDAULAH RAFIUL MULK  
GHAZI UDDIN HYDER KHAN BAHADUR  
SHAHAMAT JANG: THE  
CHANGE OF THE WIZARAT  
TO THE 'SULTANAT.'

Yaminuddaulah Saadat Ali Khan died on Rajab 22, 1229 (July 11, 1814), when a quarter of the night had passed and Ghaziuddin Hyder Bahadur succeeded to the hereditary masnad with the help of the company's representative. Badshah Begam was given the title of 'Maryam-ul Asmat Bilkis-us-sitwat Mahali-Khas' (chief wife) مریم العصمت بلقیس السطوت محل خاص of Nawab Wazirul Mumalik Rafaatuddaulah Rafiul Mulk Ghaziuddin Hyder Khan Bahadur Shahamat Jang

نواب وزیر الممالک رفعت الدولہ رفیع الملک غازی الدین حیدر خان بہادر شہامت جنگ  
and the Murshid Zada (the son of the King) مرشد زادہ was granted the robe of heir-apparent and the title of Imtiazuddaulah Umdatul Mulk Naseer Uddin Hyder Khan Bahadur Asad Jang

امتیاز الدولہ عمدۃ الملک نصیر الدین حیدر خان بہادر اسد جنگ  
and Agha Mir<sup>1</sup> was given the robe of the 'Nayabat'

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop Heber who saw Agha Mir at Lucknow in 1826 observes, "He is a dark, harsh, hawk-nosed man, with an expression of mouth which seems to imply habitual self-command struggling with a naturally rough temper . . . He was originally Khansaman to the present king."

Dr. Spry, his medical attendant, says, "Agha Mir succeeded to the office of minister early in the reign of Ghazi

(Deputyship) and the title of Mutamaduddaulah Mukhtarul Mulk Syed Muhammad Khan Bahadur Zaigham Jang

معتمدالدولة مختارالملک سید محمد خان بہادر ضیغم جنگ

The Pargana of Salon<sup>2</sup> was given as Jagir to Bilqis-us-sitwat بلقیس السطوت (Badshah Begam). Full powers inside the Mahal were given to a Syed lady of Shahjahanabad and those outside the palace together with the charge of the administration of Badshah Begam's jagir to her nephew, Mir Fazal Ali. Mutamaduddaulah was entrusted with full administrative powers of the royal household and the state.

In the year 1230 A.H. (1815 A.D.), Nawab Nazir Muhammad Afrin Ali Khan<sup>3</sup> and Mirza Qamaruddin Ahmad<sup>4</sup> *alias* Mirza Haji, son of the late Mirza Jafar

Uddin Hyder and although a man of humble origin was not unworthy of elevation. He was a man of quick apprehension and acute intellect, and exhibited great address. While never losing sight of his own interests, he maintained for many years the ascendancy over his master and his influence in the court of Lucknow."

<sup>2</sup> A sub-division of the Rae Bareli district lying to the south-east of the town (Rae Bareli). Salon is an ancient Muslim town. It was the headquarters of a chakla during the Nawabi rule. After the annexation of Oudh Salon gave its name to a district but shortly after it was replaced by Rae Bareli itself.

<sup>3</sup> He was a slave of Asafuddaulah. He gradually rose into prominence and wielded great influence in the State. He died at Lucknow in 1817.

<sup>4</sup> Mirza Jafar enjoyed the confidence of Col. Baillie, the Resident, and was therefore able to exert his influence in favour of Ghazi Uddin Hyder at the time of his accession. He died broken-hearted (1814) for he was not offered

gained great influence with the Nawab (Ghazi Uddin Hyder) and filled his ears with complaints against Mutamaduddaullah who consequently fell into displeasure.

About the time that these events were taking place, it was reported that the Governor-General, Lord Moira, Marquis of Hastings, was coming to Furrukhabad.

The Nawab, therefore, decided that the heir-apparent with Mutamaduddaulah and Raja Daya Kishen<sup>5</sup> should go to wait upon him and consult him on certain matters. Now, some people who waited for this opportunity, in Mutamaduddaulah's absence, filled the Nawab's ears with reports of his indifferent attitude towards the heir-apparent and of other untoward events which showed his faithlessness and disloyalty. Thus, the Nawab was highly displeased with him and placed him under confinement after his return. The affairs of the state were now entrusted to the Nawab Nazir, his agent Khuda Bakhsh and to the above-mentioned Mirza Haji.

As the subject of this short thesis is different, I leave this account here and resume the original narrative.

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ministership as a reward for this service. His son Mirza Haji who had once refused to accept the high office out of consideration for his father was more fortunate. After his father's death, he was entrusted with the duties of ministership for a short time.

<sup>5</sup> He was raised to 'Diwani' by Ghazi Uddin Hyder and given the title of 'Raja.' Previously he was a 'Wasil-baqi-nawis' during Raja Jhaoo Lal's term of office and though suspended by the next minister Tafazzul Husain Khan, he was reinstated by Asafuddaulah himself.

In the year 1232 A.H. (1817 A.D.), Mutamadud-daulah was once again taken into favour. He purged the court of his enemies and established his full authority in the state. The same year, at the instance of the Governor-General, the throne and the crown were improved with jewels and rubies, under the supervision of Sah Bihari Lal Mahajan (money-lender). All the English officers posted in the frontier districts of Oudh, that is, Furrukhabad, Cawnpore, Allahabad and Jaunpur were invited through John Monckton, the Resident.

On Zilhij 18, 1233 A.H. (19 October, 1818), in the presence of the English officers, the Nawab assumed independent kingship and accepted the 'nazars' presented by the State dignitaries. The words, 'Abul Muzaffar Muizzuddin Shah-i-zaman Ghazi Uddin Hyder Shah-i-Oudh'

ابوالمظفر معیزالدین شاہ زمن غازی الدین حیدر شاہ اودہ

were engraved on the royal seal and the couplet

سکہ زن بر سیم و زر از فضل رب ذو المنن

غازی الدین حیدر عالی نسب شاہ زمن

(Ghazi Uddin of high family and king of the world, by the grace of God, coined gold and silver) was inscribed on the gold and silver ingots. Mutamadud-daulah was honoured with the title of 'vazier' and the heir-apparent with that of 'Suleiman Jah.'

To satisfy ambition for power, Badshah Begam thought of a new plan. She alleged that the 'naya-bat' (Deputyship) was the privileged right of the heir-apparent and, therefore, suggested that the

appointment of Mir Fazal Ali to help the rightful 'Naib' (Deputy) would be conducive to the best interests of the state.

But in spite of all her efforts, she was unsuccessful. Mutamaduddaulah who had a great influence with the king saw through the plan. He set the king against her and persuaded him to discontinue his visiting the Begam's place.

Shortly after, when the differences had exceeded all limits, Muhsanuddaulah Bahadur left his turbulent grandmother and presented himself before the king and, in compliance to the royal order, agreed to stay with his family at Mirza Haji's place. But Suleiman Jah did not leave the Begam in spite of the remonstrances of the chief officials of the state and suffered all sorts of trouble. Mutamaduddaulah tried all means of getting a hold on Mir Fazal Ali, but he failed.

The Begam, with the help of Mir Fazal Ali, recruited a number of freebooters from the capital city, her jagirs, parganas and other town areas under her authority so that they could be used in case she had to resort to force. This came to Mutamaduddaulah's ears who tried to prevent it and stop Mir Fazal Ali's attendance at the Begam's palace. Mutamaduddaulah continued these efforts for some time and failing, he instigated the king to ask the Begam to hand over the Mir and that, in case she did not comply with the royal orders, the Mir was to be brought out by force of arms. But, in spite of tremendous efforts, Mutamaduddaulah failed signally.

On Zikad 24, 1237 A.H., corresponding to August 13, 1822 A.D., the royal armies besieged the Begam's

palace. Thereupon, she ordered the quota of soldiers to fight the royal army and refused to hand over the Mir to state officials. After the dispute had reached unreasonable limits and they found that the Begam would not submit, the royal agents were compelled to bring the matter to the notice of the officiating Resident who sent Captain Holmes with two companies of Tilangas and Syed Baqar Ali Khan, the Mir Munshi, to the palace, with directions to admonish the Begam and advise her to hand over Mir Fazal Ali. Further, they had instructions to resort to force, if she still persisted.

The captain and the Mir Munshi spent a quarter of the day in this attempt. At last, through Suleiman Jah the Begam handed over Mir Fazal Ali to the captain and said she did so on the responsibility of the company's officials whose adherence to their promises was reputed to be unshakable. Further, she said that she expected the Mir would be sent to her any moment she called for him. The captain consented, and brought Mir Fazal Ali and his aunt Faizun Nisa seated on palanquins guarded by English soldiers.

Now the King's agents proposed that both (Mir Fazal Ali and Faizun Nisa) should be handed over to them, but the Resident refused to do this. The Mir's property and cash worth several lacs of rupees was, however, laid waste and plundered by the royal officers, particularly, Mutamaduddaulah's men, and his well-built and strong buildings were battered down.

But the Begam was not put to any such trouble. Although the posting of English soldiers at her gates

with orders to close the entrance to the palace looked very much like confinement, still it had the good result of ensuring safety to the life and property of the Begam and Suleiman Jah.

Shortly after, on the 19th of Muharram 1238 A.H., corresponding to Monday, October 6, 1822, Mir Fazal Ali and Faizun Nisa, at their own request, were despatched under the escort of English soldiers to Shahjahanabad. A great tumult arose the same day. Three royal decrees forbidding the service of the Begam, Suleiman Jah and Mir Fazal Ali were posted at different places, copies of which are given below:—

#### I. ROYAL DECREE ADDRESSED TO PROFESSIONAL SOLDIERS AND ARMED MEN.

It is hereby ordered that professional soldiers and armed men who openly or secretly enter the service of my son Suleiman Jah will be punished with rigorous, unterminable imprisonment and their houses will be confiscated. It is, therefore, desirable that in order to keep their family and property safe, they should not do so. (Printed at the Chhapa Khana Sultani Royal Press [Lucknow], on the 12th of Muharram 1238, A.H.)

#### II. ROYAL FARMAN ADDRESSED TO THE OFFICERS OF THE KING'S ARMY.

As Naseer Uddin Hyder, instigated by Mir Fazal Ali, acted against the wishes of My Majesty and as a punishment he was first imprisoned and then ordered



to leave the kingdom with his family, it is, therefore, ordered that none of our military officers should have anything to do with Naseer Uddin Hyder and none should accept any gifts or rewards from him. In case of disobedience of this order, the defaulter will have to suffer rigorous imprisonment, confiscation of his house and dismissal. (Printed at the Sultani Chhapa Khana, Lucknow, on the 12th Muharram, 1238 A.H.)

III. IT IS HEREBY NOTIFIED that Mir Fazal Ali secured an appointment at the Deorhi with the help of his aunt Faizun Nisa who was a Mughlani of Khas Mahal (the chief lady) and he (Mir Fazal Ali) gradually rose to the office of Darogha (Superintendent). As Fazal Ali was a man of low origin, his promotion to superintendentship was enough to turn him faithless and disloyal. He embezzled lacs of rupees of the royal household, the jagir and of the Deorhi. Not only this, but the Mir even planned the ruin of the state and matured schemes for bringing about a great disturbance and revolution. In order to achieve his ends, he instigated my son, Suleiman Jah, to commit acts of disobedience and waywardness. He gave him false hopes about the future and led him into evil ways. He sowed the seed of strife in the royal household, created misunderstandings and even persuaded the prince to take all the servants of the palace and march out of the capital to take residence somewhere outside. One bad effect of all that he did was depriving the prince of the benefits of good training and sound education which had to be stopped.

But Suleiman Jah, because of his inexperience and tender age, did not foresee the evil results and prepared to act according to his advice.

Mir Fazal Ali, however, went a step further. Within the capital city itself, he got together an army. This incurred the royal displeasure and consequently he was put into prison. Further, as a punishment for his evil deeds, he and his family were exiled from the capital.

It is, therefore, declared that anyone who is guilty of similar acts of disloyalty and rebellion will be as severely punished. (Printed at the Chhapa Khana Sultani, Lucknow, on Muharram 12, 1238 A.H.).

The Begam during the period her palace was besieged, lived only on such food and water which was prepared and drawn either by herself or by her granddaughters, Haji Begam and Wazir Begam. She was so penniless that some of her animals could get fodder only after the seventh or eighth day. Many of her servants left her for fear of royal displeasure and those who were still loyal to her, considered it an act of divine mercy when they got parched gram after a couple of days of starvation.

This state of things continued till Mordant Rectus came over to Lucknow as the Resident. He interceded, on behalf of these sufferers, to the King who pardoned them.

On Zilhij 9, after the first quarter of the night, Imam Bakhsh Mirdaha and the son of Fateh Ali were ordered to take the royal message secretly to the heir-apparent. Shortly after the messengers had

arrived, Saheb Alam (the heir-apparent) came out of the palace and told them that he was ready to do what the King had ordered. For these services, the son of Fateh Ali was awarded the Khilaat of 'Chahar Parcha' (robes containing four clothes) and Imam Bakhsh was honoured with 'Doshala' and 'Roomal' (a shawl and a handkerchief for the head-dress), and orders were given to the effect that the procession and the conveyance should be ready the next morning. Uniforms, belts and turbans were accordingly distributed to 'Khas bardars.'

On the tenth of the month Fateh Ali Khan<sup>7</sup> and Amrit Lal<sup>8</sup> waited upon the heir-apparent and told him . . . . . that he was called by the king. Saheb Alam hurriedly got ready and presenting himself before the king, laid his head on the royal feet. The king embraced him most lovingly and gave him some advice. At this hour, the Resident arrived and at the king's instance, he also embraced him. After this, when the king sat on the throne, Saheb Alam presented the nazar and received the khilaat. The grant of the khilaat being another occasion for the nazar, he presented it again and returned highly satisfied

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<sup>7</sup> One of the most trusted of Saadat Ali Khan's servants. He rose to prominence by his integrity and was therefore put in charge of the royal treasures by Saadat Ali Khan himself and later by his successors.

<sup>8</sup> Amrit Lal was a Saxena Kayestha. He entered service in the reign of Saadat Ali Khan and was promoted to the office of the 'Daroghah Diwankhana' in Ghazi Uddin Hyder's time. In the next reign he was honoured with the title of 'Raja.' As he belonged to Agha Mir's party, he was imprisoned after the minister's fall. To save himself from torture and further disgrace, he put an end to his life in 1828.

after distributing three thousand rupees on his way home.

On the 11th of the month, the king sent a message to the Resident asking him to withdraw the troops from Saheb Alam's residence. The Resident, in reply, said that he had written to the commanding officer at Mandyaon<sup>o</sup> to act accordingly. The troops were, therefore, withdrawn, and the military officer in charge of the company posted there was awarded three thousand rupees by the king.

The Begam even now kept Saheb Alam back from going out to attend the durbar or to venture forth hunting expeditions and kept him busy with the ladies. At last the heir-apparent grew sick of this and while talking to the king about certain matters, he showed dissatisfaction with the Begam. Upon this, the king ordered that the palaces and gardens in Hyder Bagh, Shish Mahal and Hasan Bagh be elaborately furnished and kept ready for the heir-apparent. Then, in order that Saheb Alam might not feel lonely, Nawab Muhsanuddaulah was instructed to keep company with him.

Now, Mutamaduddaulah, who was anxious to increase his own influence, came to the king with a fresh proposal. He suggested that Saheb Alam should occupy his Daulatpura Baradari so well-built and elaborately furnished and might stay there at least so long as the royal palaces at Itamar Bagh and

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<sup>o</sup> Mandyaon is a small town four miles north of Lucknow. It gives its name to the old cantonments which existed here prior to the mutiny and were built by Saadat Ali Khan. The Mandyaon troops mutined in 1857 when the cantonments were burnt and never again occupied.

other places were not ready. The king gave his consent and consequently Amrit Lal Arz Begi waited on the heir-apparent and informed him of it.

Saheb Alam accompanied by Muhsanuddaulah and Roshanuddaulah at once left for the Baradari. A large crowd of spectators assembled to witness the scene of his 'sawari'. The horses of the heir-apparent's stable were almost dying with starvation and were hardly able to carry the riders, even a few steps. When the prince's retinue drew near, Nawab Mutamaduddaulah went out to receive him. After he had taken his seat on the 'Masnad,' the minister presented the Nazar. All possible care was taken to entertain the guest, and on the 20th, according to the king's orders, Saheb Alam accompanied by Mutamaduddaulah rode away from the Baradari to Hasan Bagh and occupied it.

Next Roshanuddaulah<sup>10</sup> and Mutamaduddaulah went to Badshah Begam's palace and sent Saheb Alam's chief wife Sultan Begam together with Mirza Rafiuddin Hyder *alias* Munna Jan's wet-nurse to the place. Fateh Ali Arz Begi conducted the lady's sawari with an accompaniment of the band to Hasan Bagh, while Roshanuddaulah and Mutamaduddaulah returned to the king's presence. For two or three

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<sup>10</sup> Roshanuddaulah became minister in 1832. Shore in his work 'Notes on Indian Affairs' says that he was "A well-disposed man . . . but he wants nerve . . ." John Low the Resident writing in 1832 says, "Roshanuddaulah . . . is good-natured. . . he possesses no firmness of character." Mill, the historian, forms a similar estimate saying that he was "a person of respectability, but of little talent, and unused to business."

days after, according to the royal orders, dishes prepared at a cost of one hundred rupees were sent to Saheb Alam.

After Suleiman Jah's desertion, Badshah Begam totally abstained from food. On Safar 7, Mutamadud-daulah went to the Begam's palace and made a humble request that she should be pleased to partake of the food he would send her. The Begam consented and the Nawab kept on sending large varieties of dainty food to the Begam till the twelfth of the month. This practice was discontinued as desired by the Begam, after the king had granted her a sum of rupees two hundred thousand.

Next, Badshah Begam sent Musammat Rajbi Asil (maid-servant) with two pairs of clothes and seven thousand rupees to Suleiman Jah and made a promise of sending the same amount of money every month. He kept the clothes and returned the money, giving rupees two hundred as a reward to the lady messenger.

As there was still communication between Saheb Alam and the Begam through the female attendants, he was soon persuaded by flatterers and artful persons to get reconciled to the Begam. Consequently, Saheb Alam abstained from meals on the twenty-sixth, and the next day he returned to the Begam's palace.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE BIRTH OF RAFI UDDIN  
HYDER, MUHAMMAD MEHDI, FAREIDOON  
BAKHT *alias* MUNNA JAN AND SUS-  
PICIONS ABOUT HIS PARENTAGE  
AND THE ENQUIRY MADE  
REGARDING THE SAME

On Zilhij 5, 1235 A.H., corresponding to September 14, 1820, in the afternoon, Sukh Chin, afterwards styled Afzal Mahel, a Khawas (female attendant) of Naseer Uddin Hyder, gave birth to a male child who was born long after the usual period of confinement was over, that is, after 25 months. The maid-servants in the palace bathed the child about 4 hours before sunset and handed him over to Badshah Begam. The Begam was overjoyed and ordered celebrations befitting the occasion.

She gave the child the name of Muhammad Mehdi Rafi Uddin Hyder *alias* Munna Jan. Next, she sent Muhsanuddaulah with 101 gold Mohars to be presented as 'Nazar' to the king on her behalf. Shortly after, Suleiman Jah himself was sent to present the Nazar personally. But Amrit Lal Arz Begi, Fateh Ali, and Sidi Abdul Karim darogha of Diwankhana told them that, by royal orders, they were strictly enjoined not to allow them to the presence and therefore they should return. The next day on the information got from Amrit Lal, the king ordered the dismissal of all the soldiers, and the military officers posted at the entrance to the royal palace

through which Suleiman Jah and Muhsanuddaulah were allowed to pass in.

Two days after, the news-writer communicated this to John Monkton, the Resident, who thought that the situation cropped up because the heir-apparent had wilfully absented himself from the Idul Fitr prayer in spite of the king's orders. So when the Resident next visited the king he said to him, "As a friend I have a right to complain that your Majesty neglected to inform me of the birth of your own grandson. I could not come over to offer congratulations simply because I had no information."

On hearing this, the king looked as if he had no knowledge of the event and showed by his facial expressions that he did not understand the Resident. Thereupon, the Resident repeated all that he had learnt about the affair of the child's birth and told him that because the occasion called for a ceremonial visit, he had to wait for official information from His Majesty in the morning.

The king now looked thoughtful and after some time gave an evasive reply, saying, "This is not the proper occasion. We shall talk over the matter some other time." The Resident was surprised to hear this and he enquired from the king if what he had learnt about the child's birth, the prohibition of Suleiman Jah and Muhsanuddaulah and the dismissal of the soldiers posted at the entrance-door was correct.

The king replied, "After the child was born, the heir-apparent attended by 'Khas-bardars' tried in the evening, to enter the presence, by force. But, because the child was born from the womb of a washer-



woman who, only fifteen days back, had been abducted and brought to the palace, simply for giving birth to a child, I did not order the performance of the usual ceremonies, observed on such auspicious occasions." He further added, "I knew that the whole affair was a mockery. Hence, no recognition was made." Thereupon, the Resident expressed his doubts to the king about the truth of the information he had received and said, "It is just possible the enemies of Suleiman Jah and Badshah Begam have concocted the whole story." But the king tried to assure the Resident that he had made a thorough and careful enquiry. To this the Resident replied, "I do not see why the heir-apparent himself became a party to this shameful business. He must have certainly been in the know and therefore should not have committed the grave error of being an accomplice to it."

So the Resident still entertained grave doubts about Suleiman Jah's complicity, which, even if it were to be admitted, was, in his opinion, due to either lack of foresight or tender age.

Therefore hardly satisfied with the king's argument, he reminded him of the information he had given him some time back—the heir-apparent had fallen in love with some girls in the palace and some of them were even pregnant—and he came to the conclusion that the child was derived from Suleiman Jah's loins. (The information referred to above was given fifteen months back and since then nothing was heard about the birth of a male child. There was, however, a widespread rumour that a female child was born, but even this was incorrect.) But the king

humorously rebutted the argument, saying, “ Funny! Has a child ever been born after twenty-five months—the period that has elapsed since? ”

Soon after the conversation ended with the king’s last remark that he as well as the Governor-General earnestly desired to see the heir-apparent married to the daughter of a noble family.

Further, the news-writer, another source of information, communicated to the Resident that Badshah Begam had some time back sent three girls to Suleiman Jah and that the child was born of one of them.

The Resident communicated all these details to the headquarters of the Government at Calcutta and wrote to the Governor-General, “ The father recognises the child but the grandfather does not. It is difficult to enquire into the truth of the king’s assertion that Suleiman Jah is not the father of the child and it is still more difficult to understand the real motives of the supporters of the two parties.”

In a letter dated October 4, of the same year, Mr. Mencliff, the Secretary of the Foreign Department, sent a reply in acknowledgment of the receipt of the Resident’s letter dated September 16, of the same year, saying, “ We learn from you that in the house of the heir-apparent a child was born whom the king refuses to recognise. Lest there should arise an occasion for dispute, it is incumbent upon us to make a full investigation and hence, it is in the fitness of things that you should institute an enquiry to find out if the heir-apparent is the child’s real father. Further the Governor-General hopes that the king of

Oudh himself will make every possible effort to investigate the real truth and remove the doubts."

Considering the coincidence of the event that the child was alleged to have been from the womb of a washerwoman and that a pregnant woman of the same caste was reported to have been missing, the Resident desired that the statement of the missing woman's husband be recorded with all care, before the king would hear of this and try to tamper with him through his servants. The Mir Munshi was, therefore, asked first to take the washerman in his service and then to record his statement. When the Resident next visited the king, he gave him a piece of paper requesting that in order to avoid future disturbances in the state, he should put down in writing his views about the child after a careful thought, and further added that it would be advisable if he himself went into the palace and saw the child. But the king did not like to do this and repeated that the child was not his grandson and, therefore, he had observed no ceremonies and rejoicings and further argued that if there was nothing wrong, Badshah Begam had no reason to deviate from the common practice of inviting all the ladies of the family at the hour of the child's birth.

Next the king ordered the midwife to be searched out and brought before him and further he himself wrote a letter about this to Badshah Begam.

All these facts show that the Resident tried in all possible ways to investigate the matter.

Further the news-writer brought to the notice of the Resident the fact that on Jamadussani 25, (1233), corresponding to May 13, 1817, the king had sent

three women presented by Muntazamuddaulah Mehdi Ali Khan to Badshah Begam through Maimanut Khwaja Sara, two of whom had died and the third, then living, known as Afzal Mahal was the mother of the child. He further added that the child had sucked at her breast and that the heir-apparent and Badshah Begam contended that if the king entertained suspicions on that score, he could see the mother and the child with his own eyes.

Although a record of the statement of the washerman is out of place here, still in order to acquaint all classes with facts, a summary of it is given here.

#### STATEMENT OF PIRA WASHERMAN BEFORE THE RESIDENT

“My name is Pira washerman. My wife, Munna, aged seventeen years, was eight months gone with the child. On the\*? of Ziqad, 1235, corresponding to August 17, 1820, when two “gharis” of the day had passed, she went to Parwarish Ali’s house to hand over washed clothes and did not return. In the noon Munya Dallala came to my place and enquired about her. My mother-in-law said, “She has gone to Parwarish Ali’s place.” Returning home I waited for her till evening and then went to Parwarish Ali’s place where I learnt that she had left his house. As some people informed me that Munya Dallala with the complicity of Parwarish Ali had sold my wife, I went to her place, but her son told me that she had

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\* The date of the month is not given in the manuscripts consulted. By calculation it comes to 7 Ziqaad.

been out for two days and had not returned. At last I found her out on the third day and got her arrested after bringing all the facts to the notice of the Kotwal.

Four days after the Dallala promised to bring back my wife in case she was released. She was therefore set free, after her name was registered in the Kotwali, and attendance recorded.

After this, on the complaint of my mother-in-law, Musammat Beejan, the Khurd Mahel of Mutamadud-daulah, had the Dallala arrested again, and sent to the Kotwal. She was again kept in custody. Then Mutamaduddaulah issued strict orders that a good search be made for my wife. The Kotwal took strong measures but to no purpose. At last, he told me that the orders of the Kotwal carried no weight inside the Rang Mahel. I was now hopeless. The 'Dallala' was released on the 4th Muharram. I strongly believe the statement made by quite a large number of people that my wife was sold for a sum of Rs. 150 at Rang Mahel is correct."

The Resident on December 20, of the same year, communicated to the Governor-General a full account of the interview with the king and of the statement of the washerman. After this, during the period the Assistant Resident Mr. Raper was officiating for Mr. Mencliff, one day, the king asked Muhsan-uddaulah as to why his maternal uncle, that is, Naseeruddin Hyder did not come over to enquire about his health as he had received an injury in the leg. He said that he was waiting for the royal order. The

king said, " Go and ask him to present himself with his son at once." Muhsanuddaulah informed Badshah Begam, and she sent both the heir-apparent and the child Munna Jan to the king. The heir-apparent placed his head on the royal feet, and the king took him up, embraced him weeping bitterly and took the child in his arms. After a short time both of them were honoured with robes and dismissed. The same day, 10th April, 1821, the officiating Resident (Mr. Raper) informed the Governor-General of this reconciliation.

But among other factors that prove the spurious nature of the child, one is that during Mr. Maddock's tenure of office as Resident, the Begam gave out that the period of pregnancy lasted for more than two years. Then, it was a widespread rumour and one that was corroborated by Mutamaduddaulah's statement (This is above suspicion because Badshah Begam had solemnly promised Mutamaduddaulah to give him the office of the ' Naib ' and therefore he had no motive except telling the truth when he corroborated the statement that Munna Jan was a spurious child.) that Naseeruddin Hyder was a born impotent and was therefore unfit for cohabitation with women, and hence the Begam despairing of the prospects of an issue secured this child. Consequently everybody in the capital knew that Fareidoon Bakht was not the real son of Naseeruddin Hyder but that his adoption was due to the fact that Naseeruddin Hyder was childless.

Muntazamuddaulah's statement is another unassailable proof. He said to the Resident that

Naseeruddin Hyder had distinctly told him that both Kaiwan Jah and Fareidoon Bakht were not his real sons and had expressed sorrow for being childless. Then Naseeruddin Hyder, after he had ascended the throne, never moved for the recognition of Fareidoon Bakht as the heir-apparent but looked rather disposed to Kaiwan Jah, who was not his son. Consequently, the Resident communicated all the facts to the Governor-General on January†, 1831, corresponding to Rajab 16, 1246 A.H.

As some persons, acquainted with the facts of the case, were residing at Cawnpore, their statements as copied below, were recorded by Mr. Oldfield, the Judge at Cawnpore.

STATEMENT OF PARWARISH ALI KHAN *alias* CHHOTAY  
KHAN, WITHOUT COMPULSION AND BY HIS OWN

FREE WILL, JAMADULAWWAL 19, 1246,

CORRESPONDING TO NOVEMBER 6, 1930

it.

Munya a washerwoman, who was in my service, having washed the wearing apparel, brought to my place, in Zilhij. Bibi Buddhi Khanam, commonly called Amani Khanam, a maid-servant of Badshah Begam, who frequently visited us as a guest was present at this hour. In my presence, she said to Munya, " You are pregnant. But you are not on good terms with your husband. As search is being

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† The date of the month is not given in the manuscripts consulted. By calculation it corresponds to January 1, 1831. The ' Oudh Papers relative to succession to the throne of Oude', (printed on August 15, 1838) also give January 1, 1831 as corresponding to Rajab 16, 1246.

made for a pregnant woman in the palace, I shall take you to the Begam. If you chance to bring forth a male child, you will be provided with all the luxuries, namely, a magnificent house, a train of female servants, gay and rich clothings, choice food and other means of ease and pleasure. May I hope you will act up to my advice and remember me for this good turn?" As Munya was dissatisfied with her husband, she acted up to her advice and both Munya and Buddhi Khanam, getting into a curtained litter (محافه) went to the Begam's palace. One Mirza Inayat Ali accompanied them to the entrance of the palace and he is still living in the city. I met the woman (Buddhi Khanam) on the fourth of this month and she was suffering from fever. Three days after (7th) she died.

*Question.*—How many days was it after Munya's going to the palace that you came to know she had given birth to a child?

*Answer.*—After 15 or 16 days.

#### THE STATEMENT OF MIRZA INAYAT ALI (ON THE SAME LINES)

In the month of Zilhij (I do not remember the date and the year), I was sitting at the door of Parwarish Ali Khan's residence. One of Badshah Begam's female attendants, named Amani Khanam, came, as usual, to the place and told me that she would feel obliged if I escorted her. I enquired about the whereabouts of the woman and learnt that it was Munya, the wife of Pira Dhobi. As she was a washer-



woman and I knew her, because of her profession, I enquired about the purpose of taking a pregnant woman to the palace and learnt it was exactly such a woman that was required there. They were seated in one litter and I escorted them to the gate of the palace. Although they had promised to give me a large sum they did not give me even a penny after they had entered the palace.

*Question.*—How many days after Munya's entrance did you come to learn that she had given birth to a child?

*Answer.*—After 15 or 16 days.

THE STATEMENT OF SHEIKH ZAINULLAH  
(ON THE SAME LINES)

I was in the service of Amani Khanam. She took a pregnant woman to Badshah Begam's palace and asked me to accompany her to the entrance of the palace. I escorted her.

*Question.*—How many days was it after Munya's being taken to the palace that you learnt she had delivered?

*Answer.*—After 15 or 16 days.

THE STATEMENT OF MUSAMMAT MEHTAB, A MIDWIFE  
OF DAULAT KHANA QADIM (THE OLD HOUSEHOLD),  
(ON THE SAME LINES)

It is a fact that Badshah Begam called and kept me in the palace and said that Sukh Chain Khawas was pregnant. I often slept with her in the same

bed and felt her belly to find out if she was with child but never found the symptoms of pregnancy. After the expiry of nine months, the Begam got displeased with me and threatened me with disgrace and death. She asked me to explain why I could not have produced the child and I told her that as there was no child in the womb it was impossible to do so. This answer inflamed her wrath and she sent me to the Abyssinians' apartment where I had to stay for seven days. One day when four 'gharees' in the midnight had passed, Faizunnisa came to me saying that the pains of child-birth had come upon Sukh Chain and congratulated me on my good fortune. I went with her but there were no symptoms of child-birth. I was disappointed and had to keep quiet for fear of the punishment of death. Then Faizunnisa suggested to me that I should go out to smoke the pipe. I did so. After a 'gharee,' it was reported that the child was born. I was astonished and returned to the palace. Faizunnisa and other ladies in the palace brought a child to me. I cut its navel-string and got a pair of topaz bracelets and a sum of Rs. 1,000 as a present. I called for a piece of cloth and oil to perform the usual services to the mother but they told me that this practice was common among the poor classes only and was not in vogue in the houses of nobles. Faizunnisa took Rs. 200 out of the sum awarded and a sum of Rs. 800 was left to me. When Ghaziuddin Hyder Shah-i-zaman called me and enquired into the matter, I had made the same statement.

*Question.*—What was the date, the month and the year of the birth of the child?

*Answer.*—I do not fully remember, but it was probably the month of Zilhij.

*Question.*—When the child was born, did you learn who was his mother,

*Answer.*—After eight or nine days Faizunnisa told me that the people said the child was brought forth by a washerwoman. I said it was waste that I cut his navel-string, when I did not know even his mother. This gave an affront to Faizunnisa and she said, “Quiet! you should only say that his mother is Sukh Chain.” I said, “How can I tell a lie?”

#### THE STATEMENT OF DILAWAR KHAN (ON THE SAME LINES)

I am an old servant of His Majesty, Ghaziuddin Hyder, Shah-i-zaman, King of Oudh. When Munya, the washerwoman, was taken a prisoner, I was ordered to keep her in custody. I asked her why she was arrested. She replied, “I am the wife of Pira washerman. I was pregnant and Amani Khanam, a maid-servant of Badshah Begam, took me deceitfully to the palace. I gave birth to a child, and after this nobody cared for me.”

“Naubati Khanam Mughlani removed me to her own palace at a time when I so badly required medicine and the necessary restoratives, and she kindly looked after me. The king’s servants were in search of me and the Mughlani had to hand me over to one Abbas Beg who passed me on to Mutamaduddaulah for being presented before the king for an enquiry. He (Mutamaduddaulah) took me to Farah Bakhsh. My companion (Abbas Beg) was kept for

some time under the custody of a guard of soldiers."

After this, by royal orders I conveyed her to Mutamaduddaulah.

For some time, I have been residing at Cawnpore. On the 7th of the month, I was asked to go to see a dead body which, I recognized, was the body of Munya washerwoman.

THE STATEMENT OF NAUBATI KHANAM MUGHLANI,  
AN OLD SERVANT OF BADSHAH BEGAM

I know perfectly well that Munna Jan was not born from the womb of Sukh Chain Khawas. She was at all times with me and never was a child born to her. Badshah Begam willed that Sukh Chain should be declared the mother of the child. It is clear from the statement of Mahel Begam that the child was born not to Sukh Chain but to the washerwoman.

*Question.*—What midwife was called to deliver the woman?

*Answer.*—A 'dai' named Musammat Mehtab was called as the midwife.

*Question.*—Did you see Sukh Chain after the birth of the child?

*Answer.*—Yes, I saw her walking about in the palace, in perfect health.

*Question.*—What was the date, the month and the year of the child's birth?

*Answer.*—I do not remember the date and the year but it was about 11 years back in the month of Zilhij.

THE REPORT MADE BY MUTAMADUD-DAULAH FILED IN  
THE OFFICE OF THE RESIDENCY

When Badshah Begam informed the king that Sukh Chain was in a state of pregnancy, the king was displeased. He said, “Why without my knowledge and permission did you place that girl in the service of Naseeruddin Hyder, as it was the desire of Lord Hastings and myself that he should be united in marriage to the daughter of some noble family so that the first-born child should be of noble birth on both sides. After this, the king waited for 9 months, and when no child was born, he could see through the trick. Then he sent the message to the Begam saying, “Such delay in child-birth is wonderful.” She replied, “The child is ready for birth but devils or evil spirits would not permit it to be brought forth.” This confirmed the king’s suspicions. He ordered that the birth should take place in the presence of his sisters, aunts, and other ladies of the royal family. Twentyfive months thus passed and the king’s suspicion got more strengthened. In the meantime, it was reported that search was being made for a pregnant woman by the Begam’s servants and that a pregnant washerwoman, who was in the service of Muhammad Baqar, was missing. On hearing this, the king sent another message to the effect that at the hour of birth all the ladies of the ‘Mansuria’ family should be invited so that the child be born

in their presence. Some days after, all of a sudden the king was informed of the birth of the child and following this, the intelligence came that the heir-apparent was coming to deceitfully offer the Nazar and to solicit that a salute of artillery be fired, as was usual, on the birth of a child in the royal family. The king angrily said, "The salute of artillery would have been fired, if the child had been my grandson." The heir-apparent returned hopeless without being admitted to the presence. As Badshah Begam in spite of repeated injunctions had not summoned the sisters and aunts of the king and as the eunuch Naseem stated that he had no reliance on the birth of the child, which certainly was not the offspring of Naseeruddin Hyder, and even the midwife, who was summoned by the royal orders, stated that the whole affair was a mere fabrication and that before God and the Sultan she would not hide the truth which was this—The child was not born in my presence, but he was brought to me for cutting the navel-string for which I was awarded Rs. 1,000. I did not find any signs of child-birth in Sukh Chain.—The king reported the results of this enquiry to the late Resident John Monckton.

After some time, the heir-apparent and Muhsan-uddaulah brought the child in the arms of a woman to the king, but he angrily declined to look at his face, and informed the Resident through Muntazamud-daulah of this incident. Upon this the Resident said that he had heard the king took the child in his lap. On hearing this, the king got beside himself and had the Resident informed that somebody had deceived

him and given him wrong information, for he could have done so only if he had been his own grandson.

In the time of the officiating Resident Colonel Raper and Mr. Ricketts the Resident, the king told these gentlemen that the child did not spring from the loins of Naseeruddin Hyder and that it was in the fitness of things that the state should pass to a member of the same family and not to an outsider. After this, a second time Badshah Begam declared that Sukh Chain was pregnant. The king sent a Hakeem, an English doctor in his own service and another native surgeon who was a stranger at Lucknow to the palace to find out the real truth, but the Begam refused to let them do this. This report of Sukh Chain's pregnancy continued for four years but never was the child born.

As some of the statements were useless for any of the two sides, I have left them out.

As the enquiry had been stopped during the period intervening between its initiation in the time of Mr. Maddock and its resumption in that of Col. Low, Muntazamuddaulah Mehdi Ali Khan saw the Resident on February 2, 1832, corresponding to Shaban, 1247, and communicated some information in the presence of Taj Uddin Husain Khan in this connection. He said to the Resident, "All that I had told you about Kaiwan Jah and Munna Jan some time back was not said on behalf of the king, but the statement I am making now is by the express orders of the king, who has arrived at the determination of admitting to the world the fact that none of the two, Kaiwan Jah and Fareidoon Bakht, are his

sons. His Majesty has also resolved to turn them out of the royal palace and to allow them some other place either in the Daulat Khana or somewhere else."

Thereupon the Resident put the following two questions :—

(1) How did the king know that Fareidoon Bakht was not his son?

(2) Whom does he think to be their father?

Then he reminded the Nawab that he had himself some time back expressed doubts about the case. Muntazamuddaulah said, " Even then there were no grounds for suspicion but because the king had not permitted me to give out the facts, I chose to express nothing beyond doubts. The fact is that in his father's time, one day Naseeruddin Hyder went inside the palace and found Mir Fazal Ali taking some highly improper liberties with the mother of Fareidoon Bakht.<sup>1</sup> He was going to put both of them to death. But Mir Fazal Ali soon left the place and Badshah Begam saved both from being killed. Naseeruddin Hyder was highly incensed, left the palace, and for three days stayed with Mutamaduddaulah. But in compliance with royal orders, he had to go back to the palace. A second time, he left the palace and went to Hasan Bagh where he took his residence. Then the Begam endeavoured to reconcile him to the mother

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<sup>1</sup> " Afzal Mahal (the mother of Fareidoon Bakht), though of humble birth and pretensions, maintained a fair reputation among those who knew her best in a profligate court, and has continued to maintain the same up to the present day . . . "



of Fareidoon Bakht and amongst other means of effecting this, she declared her pregnant. Twenty-six months after the king's witnessing the shameful act, Fareidoon Bakht was born. During this period, Naseeruddin Hyder did not see the lady. Thus both of us, the king and myself, were perfectly sure that Fareidoon Bakht was not Naseeruddin Hyder's son."

Then Muntazamuddaulah<sup>2</sup> brought to light some facts about Kaiwan Jah, saying that the king was highly ashamed of having ever made Kaiwan Jah the heir-apparent. As regards Badshah Begam he said, "She was greatly incensed at the king's conduct in not having brought Fareidoon Bakht to an entertainment given by the Resident. She placed all the blame on me, although the king told her that he himself was responsible for not having taken Fareidoon Bakht to the Residency and that I had no hand in it. Still the Begam did not believe this and bore an ill-will. She had circulated several reports that I (Muntazam-uddaulah) would not be allowed to live for more than

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<sup>2</sup> Hakim Mehdi possessed an administrative skill such as few high officials of the later Nawabi period had. He assumed charge of ministership first in 1830 for 2 years and then in 1836 for 2 months.

"Hakim Mehdi had great administrative ability though far from scrupulous, was . . . honest . . . He worked nobly and accomplished much . . . he was not free from the vice of arrogance and his want of courtesy to the men he had to deal and the harshness with which he carried out retrenchment . . . made him exceedingly unpopular and contributed to his downfall." (Mill's History of British India.)

Bishop Heber, a contemporary traveller, says, "Hakeem Mendee, a man of considerable talents, great hereditary opulence, and to the full as honest and respectable in his public and private conduct as an eastern vizier can usually be expected to be."

two hours and had sent word to Mutamaduddaulah to be ready to come back to the capital. The bearer of her note to Mutamaduddaulah was arrested on the bank of the Ganges and is still under custody. His confession bears testimony to the veracity of this statement. The king wants that the Begum should live at some other place preferably at Fyzabad."

The Resident sent information of all this to the Headquarters on February 3, corresponding to the Ramzan of the same year. On February 9, corresponding to Ramzan 7, Muntazamuddaulah, the Resident and the king went into private conference after dinner. After a short chat, the king with a shy look said, "After 20 days the month of Ramzan will be over. It was a practice that Fareidoon Bakht and Kaiwan Jah used to go to the Mosque for Id prayers with great pomp and magnificence. But this practice has now been discontinued." The Resident said, "I have no concern with this. Your Majesty has full powers in this respect. Still you may be pleased to tell me the reason for discontinuing the practice." The king made a sign to the Nawab. But the Resident, assuring the king of full sympathy from his own side and that of the Governor-General, asked him to give reasons himself. The Nawab also insisted upon the king to explain. The king distinctly and clearly said, "I regard you as a friend. It is a fact, that neither Fareidoon Bakht nor Kaiwan Jah are my sons. I declare this so that you may inform the Governor-General accordingly. As to other things, the Nawab has already given you some preliminary information, the details concerning which he will now

confide to you.” Thereupon, the Nawab told all the facts he had once before narrated, to which the king added, “ The rumour they are my sons is false and the publicity given to it was the result of a bold enterprise and the offer of a bribe. Malika Zamania<sup>3</sup> made the promise of the payment of a lac of rupees to those who could persuade me to adopt Kaiwan Jah and a similar offer was made by Mir Fazal Ali and Sukh Chain for Fareidoon Bakht. My father as well as myself knew that Fareidoon Bakht was not my son.”

The king verified the statement made by the Nawab about Mir Fazal Ali, mother of Fareidoon Bakht and the birth of the child after twenty-six months and said, “ Previously some deceitful persons had threatened and persuaded me to admit that Fareidoon Bakht was my son and I had to give way. But now it is the right time to disclose the truth as the Naib is perfectly loyal and truth is the best word.” At last the king expressed regret and shame for his complicity with cheats and said, “ I have made up my mind not to wander from the path of righteousness.” Then the king besought the Resident to write to the Governor-General, that he (the king of Oudh) was under evil influences and that what he had done was at the instigation of others. The Resident gave him an assurance and said, “ There are many people who deviate from the right course in their youth. But now as your Majesty is of age, it is but in the

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<sup>3</sup> A low-born woman whom Naseer Uddin Hyder took to wife. She amassed immense wealth and in the beginning of her royal consort's reign wielded great influence.

fitness of things that you should wisely discharge the duties of a king, so that the state may not be ruined." Then the king gave a written statement about his being childless.

The Resident at the request of the king informed the Governor-General about these matters in full detail. The Governor-General praised the king for his truthfulness and the Resident was ordered that the king of Oudh being childless, it was in the fitness of things that the best person that is the eldest among the living sons of Saadat Ali Khan should be nominated for succession.

Previously when Naseeruddin Hyder had ascended the throne, he styled the child as Fareidoon Bakht. On the 22nd of Jamadiul-Awwal, 1244 (December 1828), Badshah Begam gave a party on the occasion of the 26th birthday of Naseeruddin Hyder and invited the ladies of the 'Mansuria' family, that is, the mothers of Nawab Naseeruddaulah, Nawab Jaffer Ali<sup>4</sup> and Nawab Kazim Ali Khan<sup>4</sup> and others. She had a new robe prepared for the king which was offered to him. In the night, the wedding ceremony of the sisters of Muhsanuddaulah to the sons of late Mirza Abu Talib Khan<sup>5</sup> and the Islamic ceremony of the circumcision of Fareidoon Bakht took place. The barber who had undertaken the operation was awarded Rs. 20,000. Fifty thousand rupees were sent to the king to be distributed among the royal servants and courtiers.

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<sup>4</sup> They were sons of Saadat Ali Khan.

<sup>5</sup> He was one of Saadat Ali Khan's sons-in-law.

As still the king and the Begam were not on good terms, the king was very much annoyed and had the clothes and ornaments burnt. He also asked Col. John Low not to accept the share of sweetmeats, she would send to him. She sent silver jars containing sweets to the Resident who in accordance with the wishes of the king refused to accept them. This was done so that Fareidoon Bakht's doubtful parentage should no more be a secret.

About the same time the Begam settled the marriage of Fareidoon Bakht to the daughter of Muhsanuddaulah, but preparations were still in progress when the bride died. (I shall, at the proper place, give full reasons commonly attributed and particularly believed in, by the king's and the Begam's servants, to have led to an exposition of bare facts by the king.)

At last the king promulgated a decree declaring that Fareidoon Bakht was not his son and the people should not recognise him the heir-apparent. *The text of the decree is given below :—*

“ My mother recognised the child named Munna Jan and styled Fareidoon Bakht, who was born of a low-caste woman, as my son, and brought him up from infancy. I told her many times that such an action was derogatory to the high status of our family and would lead to great inconveniences. The late king, my father, too, after due investigation had refused to recognise him as my son, and this was known to all. But the Begam still persisted and treated him like a scion of the royal blood.”

“ The child has no relations with me. Although it cannot be fully investigated, where the Begam got him from, still because it is very probable that the woman from whose womb the child is said to have been born was like other ‘ khawases’ (female attendants) in the habit of visiting Mir Fazal Ali’s place and could not be kept back from this practice, the child is either Mir Fazal Ali’s or of one of those whom she was at liberty to see. But these doubts arise only when it is taken for granted that the child was from her womb, otherwise, as it is publicly known he was from the womb of a washerwoman who was abducted and brought to the palace. I had told both the late king and the Begam that the child was not mine. It was, therefore, that the last king made every attempt to prove the falsity of the child. Above all, at the time of the birth of the child, I had not reached the age of puberty and hence there could be no possibility of the child’s being mine. As the evil effects of such an act could not be secreted, the whole affair was communicated to the Governor-General who was responsible for the maintenance of peace and order in this state and he, in reply consented to recognise the falsity of the child. Therefore, it is notified for the information of all classes of people, namely, the commoners, the courtiers, the grandees, the officials and other people connected with the court that the child was spurious *and not of royal blood.*”

On the basis of the statements and facts given above, the first ground for suspicion is that the child was born after the expiration of the normal period of pregnancy, *i.e.*, after 26 months. The second ground

for suspicion is that Ghaziuddin Hyder declared that the child was not Naseeruddin's and told the same thing to the Governor-General.

The third is that Badshah Begam, against the common practice and express orders of the king, failed to call the ladies of the royal household at the hour of child-birth. The fourth is that the midwife, who should have been in the know of affairs, clearly denied that the child was born so long as she was herself present, and brought to light some new facts, saying, "The ladies in the palace brought a child and handed him over to me. I cut his navel-string. I never found any symptoms of pregnancy in Sukh Chain, who was taken to be the mother of the child." The fifth is that about the time the child was born, there was a search for a pregnant woman and a pregnant slave-girl was sent by Ghazi Husain Khan of Murshidabad, for sale, to the palace. (This gentleman, who was poverty-stricken, was at that time staying at Lucknow. When Mutamaduddaulah heard of this bargain, he brought him to explain his conduct, but because, all the great men of the city had a regard for this respectable and influential person, their recommendations, together with his own disavowal of facts, secured his acquittal). The sixth ground is that if Munna Jan had been his own son, it would never have occurred to his Majesty to designate Kaiwan Jah, who was without doubt not his real son, as the heir-apparent.

The seventh is that on Col. John Low's enquiry, Naseeruddin Hyder told the Resident directly and also through his Deputy, Muntazamuddaulah that

both Munna Jan and Kaiwan Jah were not his real sons and requested him to inform the Governor-General accordingly, so that in future the state might not pass to them and the rightful claimants be not deprived. He had also added that under the influence of Badshah Begam and of some cheats and deceitful persons, he had recognised Munna Jan his son, but in fact, at the time of his birth, he had not even reached the age of puberty.

The eighth is that the royal decree confirmed the falsity of the child. Though the servants of the Company at first thought that the differences between Ghaziuddin Hyder and Badshah Begam were responsible for the disavowal, but on further investigation which was in all respects complete it was stated by Naseeruddin Hyder himself that the child was not his.

As it was illegal and improper to deprive the rightful claimants and to place the false person on the throne, the Governor-General ordered the Resident that the state should pass to the eldest surviving son of Saadat Ali Khan.



# THE DEATH OF GHAZIUDDIN HYDER, ACCES- SION OF NASEERUDDIN HYDER, THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE NAWAB AND BADSHAH BEGAM, AND THE DECLARATION OF THE FALSITY OF FAREIDOOB BAKHT'S ROYAL LINEAGE

Ghaziuddin Hyder died on Rabi-ul Awwal 27, 1243, corresponding to October 20, 1827 and Naseeruddin Hyder ascended the throne the same day at 9-50 p.m. He adopted the title of Naseeruddin Hyder, Badshah-i-Oudh. His coin bore the couplet :—

بہ دھر سکۂ شاہی زدہ زلف الہ

سیپر مرتبہ شاہ جہاں سلیمان جاہ

[By the grace of God, Suleiman Jah, the exalted king of the world struck coin.]

Although it was generally known that the new king had not been on good terms with Mutamaduddaulah (his father's prime minister) who had full powers in the state, still on his accession, he showed him such favour that it looked as though he would allow him to retain the high post of prime minister. Mutamaduddaulah, in return, did his best to please the king who was further pleased to grant him full powers over the state treasury from which he misappropriated as much of gold and precious stones as he liked.

On Jamadi-ul Awwal 20, corresponding to November 10, Lord Combermere<sup>1</sup> paid a visit to the

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Combermere, the captor of Bharatpur, was appointed Commander-in-Chief (1828).

kingdom of Oudh (Lucknow). After he had been magnificently entertained, the king and the General had a private meeting from which all except the Resident were excluded. According to the advice of Badshah Begam, the king told the General that Mutamaduddaulah was the cause of all trouble and without effecting his arrest and dismissal, the affairs of the state could not be properly managed.

Thereupon the General said that the king had full authority in internal administration, and the appointment, dismissal and even the imprisonment of all his servants was completely in his hands and then, in the presence of the Resident, he allowed him to effect Mutamaduddaulah's arrest. The secret was so well kept that in spite of having tapped every source Mutamaduddaulah could not find this out before he was actually arrested. About this time, the Begam took Fazal Ali and Faizun Nisa, who, during their exile, lived in the Company's territory, under her own protection and kept them hidden in the palace. But Mutamaduddaulah, although he had been sufficiently cautious, could not get information about this. The third day, after these exiles had returned to Lucknow, they were seen at the gate of the palace, and the people who knew them recognised them. Then the news spread out in the whole city with the result that the Nawab (Mutamaduddaulah) was greatly upset. The king pretended to be ignorant of the fact and assuring the Nawab that the robe of prime ministership would be conferred on him as soon as permission was obtained from Calcutta remarked, "The Mir was the Darogha (steward) of

the Begam's household and he might have come over for some special work. He has nothing to do with the affairs of the state."

In his letters the king, under pretence, addressed the Nawab as "Dear Brother, my flesh and my blood" (لحمك لحمي و دمك دمي). On the Jamadius Sani 10, corresponding to December 20 of the same year, the robe of 'Nayabat' (Deputyship) was taken out early in the morning. First, the king sent a confidential message through the 'Chobdar' to the Resident, asking him to arrest Agha Mir, as soon as he sent him to his residence. Then he called Mutamadud-daulah, showed him the robe and asked him first to go to the Resident to talk over certain matters, and return immediately for the ceremony of wearing the robe. The Nawab looked highly satisfied, but was badly deceived. As soon as he had an interview with the Resident and had begun conversation, two companies of English soldiers under Captain Samuel Pitch surrounded and asked him to hand over his sword. It was then that Mutamaduddaulah awoke from the stupor and realised that he had been played false. After this the Resident told him everything that was done was under the orders of the king and showed him his letters.

The Nawab then very humbly requested the Resident to save his honour. The Resident assured him of his help, and sent him home on an elephant guarded by English soldiers. The king the same day posted guard at the residences of his relations, friends and dependents. For three days there was a great tumult in the city, and ruffraffs plundered a number

of houses on the pretext that they belonged to Mutamaduddaulah's men. At last, it was at the instance of the Resident that this tumult ended. The same day the robe of ministership was given to Mir Fazal Ali. The Begam was responsible for both these acts—the tumult and the change of ministry—which she caused by telling the king the stories of kings of old and thus persuading him to effect these.

The Begam after this wrote a letter with her own hand to the Resident asking him to hand over Agha Mir to her so that he should be punished for his disloyalty and chastised severely. But the Resident refused to do so.

Although the king waited on the Begam regularly every morning and evening and considered full obedience to her orders a great duty—it is evident when the head of the state shows so much deference to a person, she is sure to hold an elevated position—still Mir Fazal Ali and Faizun-Nisa's influence in the palace and their interference in the affairs of the state gave an offence to him. But the king did not give vent to his true feelings.

At last Mir Fazal Ali retired and left off the duties of the prime-ministership, after he had been disgraced by William Muir who had the audacity to snatch away the turban from his head. Now the affairs of the state fell into the hands of Ikbal-uddaulah, the son of Fatah Ali Khan, Raja Ram Dayal and Jafar Ali Khan. As their inexperience and young age did not qualify them for such a responsible office, they soon steeped themselves in vices, such as drinking. The king at last decided to call

Mehdi Ali Khan, Muntazamuddaulah, from Farrukhabad to take over charge of the office of prime-ministership. The English officials approved of this, believing that the king wanted to improve the administration, by handing over the responsibility to a person of thrifty habits and administrative experience.

In accordance to royal orders, Muntazamuddaulah assumed charge of prime-ministership on Jamadusani 17, 1246, corresponding to November 4, 1830, and he began carrying on the administration economically. Muntazamuddaulah naturally wanted to get the royal coffers replenished, but Badshah Begam was bent upon spending extravagantly on religious innovations which she regarded more binding than the five cardinal Islamic duties. Her servants had to see the Nawab daily to ask for money. At last the vazier got disgusted, made some indirect remarks about such useless and extravagant expenditure to her which she felt because this had become a habit to her. The two were thus, by nature, opposed and consequently their relations got straitened. The Nawab now made such occasional remarks before the king about this, and tried to set him up against the Begam. The king had these days established illicit connection with a beautiful woman named Bismillah Begam who was given the title of Nawab Mukhad-darae-zaman Mehde-Uzma Bilqis Dauran Malikae Afaq Qudsia Sultan Maryam Banu Begam.

(نواب مخدرة زمان مهد عظمی بلقیس دوران ملکہ آفاق  
قدسیہ سلطان مریم بانو بیگم).

As she found the king ardently wished to have a male issue, she (the cheat) pretended to be pregnant. The king was deceived, he extolled her above all the other Begams and took every care to please her. In the beginning there were good relations between Qudsia and Badshah Begam, but after a time they quarrelled and reviled each other.

The false pregnancy had not yet terminated, when Qudsia while she was one night with the king remarked that the expected child, inspite of his being the rightful heir, would be debarred from succession as the custom was that the eldest son succeeded and the king had, at the instance of Badshah Begam, nominated the spurious Munna Jan, Fareidoon Bakht and informed the Company about this. Further she suggested that it was in the fitness of things that speedy measures be taken to check the unlawful succession. As ordained by Providence, this was about the time, when an enquiry was made by the Governor-General regarding Fareidoon Bakht's right of succession, with a view that in case the king died there should be no difficulty in the choice and the rightful person be not deprived. As the king had now reasons for reducing the influence of his mother, Badshah Begam, he gathered opinions from all sides in his own support and on the enquiry made by John Low, the Company's representative, he plainly said, "Before I reached the age of puberty, the Begam had adopted a child, who came from the womb of a maid-servant, and the loin of Mir Fazal Ali, or some other man, and passed him as my son." Further he added, "I fear lest the English would, as is generally

believed, recognise him as my son and entrust him with the administration of the state. I, therefore, declare that if a child is now born of one of my ladies, he and no other has the right to be recognised the heir." Then to add further strength to what he had orally stated, he gave a written statement about this to the Resident.

When returning to the Residency the same day that this statement was made the Resident told the English soldiers posted at the gate of the " Baillie Guard " that they were no more required to pay any respect to Munna Jan's ' sawari ' as they had been accustomed to do for a number of years and then communicated all the information he had received to the Governor-General. The reply received from the Governor-General was that he had learnt from the king's letter and his own (Resident's) that the king of Oudh was childless, and therefore decided that the next successor should be the eldest son of Saadat Ali Khan. The king then issued a notice declaring that Fareidoon Bakht was not his real son, and had it posted at public places like the Rumi Darwaza, so that the residents of the capital city and of the suburbs and also those who might claim the right of succession be informed.

At last the Naib (Muntazamuddaulah) brought to the notice of the king some facts which prejudiced him against the Begam. But before this had produced any noticeable effect, a mere hint from the Begam was enough to bring about the fall of Muntazamuddaulah on Rabiul Awwal 7, 1248, corresponding to August 5, 1832.

Roshanuddaulah succeeded him on Jamadus Sani 4, corresponding to November 18 of the same year. He brought in Subhan Ali Khan as his assistant and adviser. Now the king began openly giving vent to his feelings of dissatisfaction with the Begam. The Naib and his advisers knew that the office of 'Madarul Muham' (Deputyship) had passed so many hands because of the influence that the Begam exerted and therefore tried to set the king up against the Begam as it would only then be possible for them to hold office. The king was now highly displeased with her. Until now he used to visit the Begam's palace every day, but now he changed the practice and would do so only after an interval of two or three days. Also the infatuation that he had for Qudsia, as a consequence of her pretension of pregnancy, changed into dislike and differences arose, which so upset and drove Qudsia to desperation that she took poison and died on Rabiussani 15, 1250 A.H., corresponding to August 21, 1834. After death some powdered arsenic was found tied in a corner of her garment.

However, the king showed signs of unsurpassable grief after she was buried in the new Kerbala close to Mehdi Gunj<sup>2</sup> and he and all the grandees of the state put on the black mourning clothes. The king abstained from food as an expression of grief. When Badshah Begam heard of this, she herself visited him and with motherly affection admonished and

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<sup>2</sup> Mehdi Gunj, a part of the Saadat Gunj ward, the south-western portion of Lucknow, is named after Hakim Mehdi, one of the most famous ministers of Oudh.



advised him not to be so overcome with grief, as to endanger his own life. She said, "God has created more comely and handsome women than her. It is only useless to die for a cheat. There are many better ones who can be had, only, if you care to get them." The king was already displeased with her. These words of advice and admonition made him still more angry and he retorted, "Just recollect, how you were grieved at the death of Mir Fazal Ali. If you had a mother's affection for me, you would have put on the mourning dress. But you have none because you are not my real mother." The Begam retorted, "I have never put on a black suit, except to mourn the 'Syedush Shohada' (the Chief Martyr) Imam Husain, and will never do it. None in our family put on a black suit on the death of Ghaziuddin Hyder or Saadat Ali Khan. Evidently some ill-wishers have set you up against me and want to ruin us. This will result in nothing, but sorrow and grief." The Begam, burning with rage, returned to her palace. The king now began harassing her still more, and sent her orders to vacate the palace. The Begam replied that the palace was given her by her husband and it was impossible for her to vacate it. The king then proposed that the Begam should take from him a monthly salary of 20 or 25 thousand rupees and go and live in any other house in the capital she chose. But the Begam did not like to do this and said, "I do not want a monthly salary. However, if you want me to leave the palace, I can only do so if Salon, which had been given to me first by my husband and later by you, is granted to me again

and the Resident stands security for this transaction."

The king told the Resident about this and said, "I want nothing more from the Begam, but that she should vacate the house. If, with your help, the Begam moves with her movable property and belongings to some other place, I am satisfied. I can grant her a monthly stipend amounting to any sum, provided you fix it." In spite of repeated requests from the king the Resident rejected the offer, saying, "This is a private affair. I have orders from the Headquarters only to interfere in the affairs of the state, therefore I dare not take any action."

The king's dislike for the Begam went to such an extent that he ordered the labourers, men and women, who were employed on wages for the construction of the royal buildings, to go up without previous information to the top from which inner apartments of the Begam's palace were in sight and revile her so that she might leave her quarters in disgust. But the Begam showed firmness, did not move out from the room, and ordered the maid-servants to give no reply. As the palace was not vacated even after this foolish device, the king ordered that the royal servants should throw earthen pots containing offal and urine into the palace. The Begam was thus placed in great straits, but she retired to the tombs she had built, in memory of the Twelve Imams, and spent her days and nights in reading the Koran. Next the king ordered that pots containing offal be thrown inside those tombs, and this was done. But the Begam cleaned the tombs with her own hands, and

with the help of her maid-servants, and stayed inside.

The Begam for some time endured these things. When the king saw that even in spite of harassing the Begam to the extent that it was not possible to maltreat a lady more, his desired object was not fulfilled, he sent Gulam Yahya Khan, Fateh Ali Khan, and the officers of the Qandhari Risala, English officials and other servants and courtiers to persuade her to vacate the house, on the condition of the grant of a monthly salary of 25 thousand rupees. But the Begam did not listen and sent word to them through her maid-servants, "I have no reliance on any of you since you have forsaken the fear of God and the Prophet and deceive me only to please your master. The only way is that the king should grant the jagir given to me by my husband, and the Resident should stand security for this. Only then shall I vacate the palace." The Resident on the aforesaid grounds refused to interfere, and wrote to both the king and the Begam that the matter being of a private nature, he had to keep back and also wrote some words of advice.

When the king saw that he had failed in his plans and all classes of people hated the way in which he had maltreated one who had so carefully brought up and patronised him and (they) said that even the low and mean did not stoop to such meanness, he was enraged, left the Farah Bakhsh and came over to the Daulat Khana with the intention that he would not return before the Begam had vacated the palace. Luckily it was the time when Col. John Low visited

Calcutta for an interview with the Governor-General, Lord Cavendish Bentinck. The king gave him a letter to the Governor-General writing to him a detailed account of the whole affair and requesting him to grant permission to the Company's representative to interfere in the matter. The Begam also, though with great difficulty, sent a letter addressed to the Governor-General to the Resident expressing her desire for his interference and decision and assuring that she would obey him and submit to his orders. The Resident after a long and tedious journey reached Calcutta by the mail at 2 p.m. on Shaban 7, corresponding to December 9 of the same year. When interviewed by the Governor-General, he presented the letters of the king and the Governor-General ordered that no interference should be made in such matters.

When the Resident returned and the king learnt of the orders of the Governor-General, he still more harassed the Begam. Then she complained to the Resident, and he replied that the Governor-General had prohibited any interference. This put an end to the hopes she entertained from the English.

The persons at the helm of affairs in the state now ordered Darshun Singh Ghalib Jung<sup>3</sup> to get the

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<sup>3</sup> "Ghalib Jung was raised, from a very humble grade, by Ghazee od Deen Hyder, and about the year 1825 he had become as great a favourite with him as he afterwards became with his son, Naseer od Din Hyder, and he abused his master's favour in the same manner. The minister, Agha Mir, finding his interference and vulgar insolence intolerable, took advantage one day of the king's anger against him, had him degraded, seized and sent off forthwith to one of his creatures, Taj od Deen Hoseyn, then in charge of the

palace vacated without any regard for the Begam's honour or position. The Raja, in accordance with the royal orders, posted small bodies of troop on all sides of the Begam's quarters, and last of all sent Raja Shiva Din Singh.<sup>4</sup> With a large number of soldiers Shiva Din took eleven of the Begam's servants including Kishen Chand and others captive and sent them for custody to Terhi Kothi.<sup>5</sup> On the Zilhij 20, 1250, corresponding to April 19, 1835, a siege of the Begam's palace was established and even the bare necessities of life, food and drink, were not allowed to pass in. The Begam posted some of her 'khas-bardars,' armed at the entrance to the palace. There was, however, no trace of the troops whom she regularly paid and therefore she concluded that her great eunuchs had played her false and had misappropriated the money they realised as their pay from her treasury. But she did not take any notice of this as at such an hour it was impolitic to undertake any enquiry or to punish them for their faithlessness. Then the Raja got five strong ladders to escalate the walls of the palace and setting them up

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Sultanpur district, where he was soon reduced almost to death's door by harsh treatment and want of food, and made to disgorge all the wealth he had accumulated. Four years after the death of Ghazee od Deen and the accession of his son, Naseer od Deen, Ghalib Jung was, in the year 1831, again appointed to a place of trust at the court by the minister, Hakeem Mehdi, who managed to keep him in order during the two years that he held the reins of government. Ghalib Jung died on the 1st of May 1851, aged about 80 years." (Sleeman's Journey.)

<sup>4</sup> He was a man of low origin. Naseer Uddin Hyder gave him the title of 'Raja' as a mark of special favour.

<sup>5</sup> It was north of the Chhatar Manzil and was built by Saadat Ali Khan.

in the adjacent gardens, ordered the diggers to climb the wall, and pull down the building. Upon this, the Begam came out of the palace with her Mughlanies (female attendants). Her Abyssinian slaves began showering brickbats, stones and pieces of wood and the raiders had to flee. The women pursued them upto the door. In this scuffle the Raja and Imam Ali, the royal slave (چیلہ سلطانی) were wounded with brickbats.

Next, the Begam went back inside and the Raja ordered his soldiers to enter the palace without regard for the Begam's observing the pardah. Then someone fired a gun from the inside and both the parties commenced firing. Four Abyssinian slave-girls were shot dead at the feet of their mistress. Zalim Singh Subedar, one passer-by, and one soldier of the royal army were wounded with shots fired from the top of the palace. Ibrahim Khan Khasabardar, one Najib<sup>6</sup> soldier and some slave girls of the Begam who were on the roof, too were shot dead and royal

<sup>6</sup> The 'Imadussaadat' gives an account of the Najibs in the following words:—

چون نواب والا جناب در جنگ بکسر و کوزہ جهان آباد  
از فوج سواریه اعتقاد شده بود ..... چند پلٹن سبز پوش  
ساختہ ملقب بہ نجیب پلٹن کرد سردار شان میر احمد  
پسر میر کرم اللہ مصور بود مشاہرہ سپاہی درین پلٹن شش  
روپیہ بیش بنود ..... درین پلٹن آدم دذیل ..... گنجایش  
نداشت -

After the Nawab's (Shujaudaulah) defeat at Buxar and Korah Jehanabad, he lost faith in the cavalry . . . and enlisted some 'paltans' (platoons) of soldiers with green uniform, under Mir Ahmad, the son of Mir Karamullah, the painter. They drew no more than six rupees a head . . . It had no place . . . for low caste people.

servants threw the corpses of those killed on the Begam's side into the Gomti.

As a result of this scuffle, shops were closed in the city. When the king learnt of this, he despatched a gun to the door of the Begam's palace and ordered Ali Raza Kotwal to allay the fear of the populace and persuade them to open shops.

The Begam was by this time fatigued with hunger and thirst and was sick of the fight. She approached the door of the tombs of the Imams from the side of the garden and sought protection from the Raja.

Simultaneously Roshanuddaulah presented himself before the king and told him that the Begam had sought his help and was ready to shift to Ilmas Bagh.<sup>7</sup> The king ordered that the arrangements be at once made for her conveyance and accordingly, he (Roshanuddaulah) sent 50 'raths' and 70 'mahafas.' The Kotwal was asked to send grain-merchants to Ilmas Bagh.

The Begam took with her those five or six women who had been wounded in the scuffle. She reached Ilmas Bagh two hours after sunset and was so thirsty that she was constrained to quench her thirst with 'sharbat' on the way. On her march she was attended by Madho Singh at the head of his men and two companies of soldiers under Daljit Singh.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> About 3 miles from Lucknow. The outer walls of the Ilmas Bagh can still be seen from the metalled road running between Lucknow and Malihabad.

<sup>8</sup> Daljeet Singh was a Rajput by birth. By profession he was a soldier. He was a great favourite of Naseer Uddin Hyder.

As the houses at Ilmas Bagh were deserted, un-repaired, without light and furniture, the Begam and Fareidoon Bakht spent the whole night in the 'sukhpal,'<sup>9</sup> without food and drink, and all the slave-girls and maid-servants had to keep awake for the whole night.

By the king's orders Fatah Ali Khan Kaptan went to the Begam's palace and locked all the rooms which were well furnished and decorated. After this, the servants of the Begam were set free by royal orders.

During the scuffle, a large part of the movable property of the Begam was destroyed and plundered. But by royal orders the king's servants transferred all that was left in the palace on carts to Ilmas Bagh, the next day, and escorted all the slave-girls and maid-servants who had not been able to follow the Begam, either because there was no conveyance available or because it was rather late in the evening, to the Begam's new residence.

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<sup>9</sup> A kind of litter or 'palki.'



BADSHAH BEGAM AT ILMAS BAGH AND THE  
RECRUITMENT OF ABOUT 900 SOLDIERS  
UNDER THE COMMAND OF IMAM BAKSH  
BHISHTI. THE INTERVENTION OF THE  
RESIDENT IN ORDER TO AVOID  
FUTURE TROUBLE IN THE  
STATE

When Badshah Begam, as has been described above, took her residence at Ilmas Bagh, she matured a new plan and ordered Imam Baksh (Bhishti), resident of Fateh Ganj, to recruit secretly a number of fully equipped veteran fighters.

At first, the king and his men at the helm of affairs had no information. But soon after when this large body of men spread over the country and began plundering the crops and the fruits, the king learnt of them from the news-writers' reports and ordered that the Begam should dismiss them. The Begam pleaded she was staying in a lonely and deserted quarter and hence she had to keep this army of soldiers which kept watch over her quarters and saved her from the raids of thieves and dacoits. The king thereupon proclaimed that those who take service with Badshah Begam would be prosecuted. As it was not free from danger to have such a large troop of riffraffs stationed at one end of the city, the Resident was informed and the royal armies were despatched for the maintenance of peace. They stationed themselves on this side of the 'nala' close

to Ilmas Bagh, while the Begam's troops kept at the other bank.

Although the Resident had from the beginning abstained from intervention on the ground that it was a private affair, as matters stood he now realised the neglect of state officials and feared that this would become a danger to the state. At last he sent spies for information who corroborated the one previously received. Then the Resident himself went to the place, and found the royal army ill-equipped and weak, as compared to the Begam's soldiers, who looked sturdy, robust, and better equipped. Then realizing that in the event of a scuffle, the populace of the capital city which was so close to the place, would be exposed to grave danger, he sent Syed Iltafat Husain Khan Bahadur the Amirul Insha (the head clerk of his office) with instructions to the Begam. The Syed went to Ilmas Bagh and after conveying the Resident's compliments told her that the Resident said, "Although I did not want to interfere in private affairs, but as matters have gone to such a length that they may result in a general tumult and become a danger to the people, I am compelled to take action to ensure the safety of the state, because according to promises and treaties, the responsibility of maintaining both the internal and external peace rests with the English. The keeping of such a large body of soldiers without the consent of the head of the state is improper and it is, therefore, desirable that you should act up to my advice and dismiss all except some four or five hundred soldiers who may be retained for keeping watch and

for the protection of your property. If you agree to this, I shall be able to do you some service. A monthly stipend enough to meet the requirements of such as will be retained in your service will be fixed, and you shall be especially protected and guarded by royal troops. A full information of all this will be given to the Governor-General. But in case you fail to comply some three companies of English soldiers will be sent to disperse your men and then no expression of regret and sorrow will do you any good. A full information of the transaction suggested above will also be sent to the Governor-General."

Upon this the Begam wept so bitterly and painfully that all those who heard her were shocked. Then she said to the Mir Munshi, "I have no hesitation in complying with the orders of the Resident, rather I wished he should interfere, so that I might be saved from the wickedness of my enemies. What pains I endured in bringing up Suleiman Jah and how misguided by some mischief-mongers he maltreated me, all this must have been known to you. Even now, when I am in such a deserted place, the mischief-mongers are after me, and every day send a fresh report. In fact, I had no business to recruit such a large army but it was in self-defence, that I had to do it. If the Resident takes up my cause, and helps me in regaining the jagir granted to me by my husband, I shall go and spend there the remaining days of my life."

The Khan said, "I have not been authorised by the Resident to convey any message to him. But you can write to the Resident and may hope to get a

reply. Although I make no promises, still you can rest assured that you will be granted a stipend sufficient to meet the cost of keeping the servants in your palace provided the Governor-General approves of this." The Begam replied, "I want the Jagir. If this is allowed I shall dismiss the soldiers at once and comply with the Resident's orders. But before doing this, I have to pay up their dues. Their salaries are overdue, because I have been receiving no stipend from the royal treasury for a long time, and had to dispose of all my jewels and ornaments to meet my expenses. If I am given 300,000 rupees, I shall pay up their dues and dismiss them."

Thereupon the Munshi retorted, "How have you been paying them for the last two years? Why do you make excuses now? Obedience to the orders of the Resident is the only way left for you to live happily and to prosper."

Thus did the Munshi remonstrate with the Begam, who gave a most solemn promise on oath that she would comply with the orders of the Resident and following this, she rallied all her soldiers and ordered them to disband. The Munshi then returned to the Resident and told him all that had happened. The Resident informed the king about this dangerous state of affairs, and took permission from him for interference.

With the royal consent, a sum of one hundred thousand rupees was allowed to the Begam and the royal officers were specially ordered not to interfere with the servants of the Begam, who were allowed to move about without restriction. Further, the

Begam was given a written assurance that in case she disbanded her soldiery and kept only 400 men, who would be maintained at the expense of the state for watch, she would be given a monthly stipend of Rs. 15,000 together with a (non-recurring) grant of a sum of one hundred thousand to pay up the dues of the disbanded army.

The Begam in spite of solemn undertakings made a further request for the grant of the jagir, and three lacs of rupees, on the ground that the grants already made were inadequate for her expenses, but the Resident refused to do anything more than what had been agreed upon at first and the Begam had to submit.

Imdad and Khuda Baksh, mace-bearers, were asked to distribute to the Begam's soldiery the sum of one hundred thousand rupees which had been brought from the royal treasury. Although the Begam in the presence of these royal officers paid up the dues of some of her men, secretly she instructed them to keep at home and consider themselves still in service.

Afterwards the Begam through her wakil, Mirza Ali Khan, represented that the sum advanced fell short and therefore a fresh grant be sanctioned. The Resident had at last to yield and a fresh grant of one hundred thousand rupees was made.

In the evening bags containing money were sealed to be sent the next morning to the Begam but the same night the king's life suddenly terminated.

THE DEATH OF NASEERUDDIN HYDER, KING OF OUDH, AND THE MARCH OF BADSHAH BEGAM AT THE HEAD OF A LARGE BODY OF MEN FROM ILMAS BAGH IN ORDER TO PLACE FAREIDOON BAKHT ON THE THRONE. COL. JOHN LOW TAKES BADSHAH BEGAM AND FAREIDOON BAKHT CAPTIVE AND PLACES NASEERUDDAULAH MUHAMMAD ALI KHAN, THE ELDEST SURVIVING SON OF SAADAT ALI KHAN, ON THE THRONE

On the Rabiussani 4, corresponding to July 8, 1837, Naseeruddin Hyder died of Maladies common to persons of loose character.

At last the chief state officials, according to the established practice, communicated this sad news to Col. John Low, the Company's representative, through Molvi Yahya Khan, Vakilus Sultanat (the representative of the King of Oudh).

Like all Company's officials, who are reputed to be capable administrators, Col. John Low at once reached the spot with Dr. Stevenson.

The doctor after an operation declared that the king was dead, and then Col. John Low called Captain James Paton, his first assistant, with a company of soldiers to Farah Bakhsh to maintain order. The captain with English soldiers was seen at his place. Then with the help and advice of Roshanuddaulah and Kaptán Fateh Ali Khan, the two successful and experienced state officials, the

Resident posted armed guards at the door and the other entrance of the Kothi with orders not to let anybody, high or low, enter.

After this the Resident went back to the Residency and sent Khuda Bukhsh chobdar to Badshah Begam asking her not to move from her place, at any cost. He also sent a letter to the commanding officer at Mundayaon asking him to despatch troops.

As has been described above, the king in his life-time sometime during Muntazamuddaulah Mehdi Ali Khan's tenure of office as the prime minister had declared that Fareidoon Bakht was not his son. The Resident, in accordance with the Governor-General's order, chose Naseeruddaulah Muhammad Ali Khan, the eldest of the living sons of Saadat Ali Khan, for succession and readily sent to him John Shakespear, the Second Assistant, and Syed Iltifat Husain, the Amirul Insha, with a written document for affixing his seal.

When the two officials reached his residence after midnight they found him asleep. The servants of the Nawab were astonished at midnight to see these men, still they had to wake him even at this odd hour. When the Nawab came out to meet them, they communicated to him the happy tidings of his choice for succession. The Nawab, being highly excited, readily affixed his seal on the paper and the two officials returned to the Resident to inform him of their success. Thereupon the Resident left the Residency and accompanied by Syed Iltifat Husain and Lieut. John Shakespear returned to Farah Bakhsh to send Captain James Paton, Nawab

Roshanuddaulah and Molvi Ghulam Yahya Khan to the Nawab Naseeruddaulah. Khuda Bakhsh Chobdar had now returned to inform that the Begam had made up her mind to come to the royal apartments and had sent her Vakil, Mirza Ali Khan, to him. The Resident gave the Begam's Vakil satisfactory answers to her questions and he returned to communicate these to her. When five "Saa't"<sup>1</sup> were still left in the night, the Nawab, accompanied by Amjad Ali Khan, his eldest son, two grandsons and two sons-in-law, namely, Muhsanuddaulah and Mumtazuddaulah, alighted from his conveyance at the upper storey of Farah Bakhsh. The Resident received him on the first flight of steps where the two embraced each other. Then, hand-in-hand, they went to the verandah bordering the river, where they sat together and talked pleasantly. After this, the Nawab went to bed in one of the side rooms.

Some strange and unexpected events occurred now. The Begam, who had for three years been keeping in her service about eight or nine thousand soldiers, recruited from among the plundering villagers, by Imam Bakhsh Bhishti, an uncouth and illiterate person, resident of Fateh Ganj, marched with Fareidoon Bakht from Ilmas Bagh towards the royal palace, accompanied by 200 of these soldiers under the command of Imam Bakhsh, Mohan Singh and Lalta Prasad Rajput.

The information about the setting out of the Begam's troops was immediately brought to the

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<sup>1</sup> Saa't—A division of time equal to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  'ghari' or 60 minutes (24 minutes=1 ghari).



Resident by a reporter and following on his heels another arrived to say that the Begam had reached very close to the royal apartments, following the other bank of the Gomti. The Resident again sent her a message through Khuda Bakhsh Chobdar saying that she should not have moved at such an hour and advising her to go back.

The Begam was now inclined to go back to Ilmas Bagh, but Munna Jan and Khuda Bakhsh stood in the way and persuaded her to continue the march towards the royal apartments, arguing that if the opportunity was lost, it would be impossible to get one later.

The Resident now made an enquiry about the position of the troops and discovered that the royal army was not posted to patrol the streets and keep off the intruders, while the Battalion under Rupert kept a vigilant watch round the royal palace only, and, therefore, the road taken by the Begam was open and perfectly unrestricted. Therefore by the Resident's orders, Captain James Paton, the First Assistant, accompanied by English soldiers, marched to the western gate, and on the side of Fateh Ali Khan's house kept both the leaves of the door strongly fastened. When Badshah Begam and Munna Jan reached the place, Imam Bakhsh the leader of the mischief-mongers with the consent of Munna Jan brought up a female elephant, who looked to have been especially trained for the purpose, to force the gate. In the turmoil that ensued, the First Assistant noticed a person who had been wounded by a gun-shot fired by one of the soldiers, but still the

officers very courageously paid no heed to this and loudly and forcibly asked the mischief-mongers to keep back. But their leader unluckily did not listen to this and behaved most rudely with the result that some on the other side were severely wounded. Sarbadoon Singh and Makhan Singh, Chaprasis of the Resident, were shot at and fell down senseless. The Begam in order to get in tried the same device with the second door. Now, when the rumour that the First Assistant had been killed had spread, the Resident accompanied by Syed Iltifat Husain went to the Begam to expostulate and keep her back from mischief. But the unrestrained zeal of her followers did not allow the Begam to listen to the sage advice. By this time, the rebels had surrounded the three gentlemen (the Resident, his assistant, and Syed Iltifat Husain), broken open the gate of the Baradari overlooking the public road and entered. The Rajput soldiers—Imam Bakhsh, Mohan Singh and Lalta Prasad—now placed Munna Jan on the throne. The sily Munna Jan then accepted the Nazar presented by his servants, and the guns which his followers had brought with them were fired.

The old servants lost heart when they saw about 200 of the Begam's men marching in. All the royal palaces were now in their hands. Raja Shiva Din and others like him were besieged. Some grandees slipped away to save their honour. The rebels kept Roshanuddaulah, Naseeruddaulah and their relations in custody. They even tried to kill Roshanuddaulah but his servant Qadir Bakhsh saved him.

Subhan Ali Khan,<sup>2</sup> acting most like himself, put on a magnificent turban in place of the small pagri, his usual head-dress, and managed after a continuous flight to reach his place, and save himself. Ghulam Yahya Khan, the Vakilus Sultanat, saved his honour by jumping down from the northern wall, although both of his legs were rendered useless by the fall. It was after much difficulty that he reached the bank of the river, and got into a boat. After the disturbance was over, his men who were in search of him, reached just in time to take him home. The day had dawned and now Mirza Ali Khan, the Vakil of the Begam, went to see the Resident and tell him that he was called by the Begam. The Resident accompanied him to the palace, where the Begam was ready to receive him. He expostulated with her and advised her that the circumstances prompted that she should go back, but the Begam did not listen to this. All the time that the Resident had been discussing matters with her, he was naturally cautious not to leave her Vakil's hand. On this occasion, some of the rebels very insolently presented the Nazar and performed other ceremonies customary on the occasion of the succession of a king, but the clever Resident did not approve of these and refused to accept the Nazar with a motion of his hand. Some of them even hurt the Resident and reviled him very meanly. But the Resident kept silence. One of the rebels made an attempt even to kill him but the

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<sup>2</sup> Subhan Ali Khan was the minister's deputy. Sleeman calls him 'a Knave.' Capt. J. Herbert, the Astronomer Royal to the King of Oudh, writing in 1833 says, "Sobhan Ali Khan is . . . unprincipled, it is said, to the last degree though considerable."

Vakil kept him back by persuasion. Another fired a gun and the shot whizzed off the Resident's shoulder.

In short there was great excitement. Everyone of the rebels did strange things. The Resident grew sick of the foul language they used. At last with the help of the Vakil he slowly extricated himself and accompanied by Lieut. Shakespear and the Mir Munshi reached the courtyard of the Bara Dari. There he spent his time in keeping the British troops who had come over from the cantonment at Mundayaon in order.

As it is the practice of the wise that they leave no ground for excuse, the Resident called Mirza Ali Khan and Mustafa Khan Risaldar Qandhari who had taken part in this tumult, and asked them to tell the Begam on his behalf that the best course for her would be to leave the throne-room and go back to her palace. But they tried to evade and paid no heed to this. At last, the Resident called Mustafa Khan once again and told him that if the Begam did not present herself before him and submit within ten minutes, she would be ready to be blown up with the gun. The Begam at first promised to obey but she did not do so because her servants were bent upon fighting.

The Resident had no alternative left but to order the guns to open with grape in front of the throne-room. He also ordered that there should be no obstruction on the road for those who would save themselves by flight. The English soldiers got to the 'Baradari' with the help of ladders. Happily the Begam had, a few minutes before, moved in a palan-

quin to the house close to the ' Baradari ' where the dead body of the king lay. Mustafa Khan hastily took Munna Jan to another room, though he himself did not move from the palace and seemed to court death. When the guns were fired, sixty of the Begam's men among whom were Mustafa Khan Risaldar, Mohan Singh and Lalta Prasad, the Rajputs rebels, and Daulat, son of Nura musician, who was singing the congratulatory poems (مبارکباد), were killed. Two English soldiers also were wounded and one killed.

The Begam, witnessing this dreadful scene, could hardly keep herself inside the palanquin and she came out unveiled. After this the victorious English soldiers entered the Baradari and took Munna Jan captive. He was handcuffed and taken on foot with Badshah Begam in the palanquin to the Kothi-Zard in the Residency compound.

During the scuffle, some of the articles from the Begam's litter, some of her ornaments and also some furniture of the Baradari were plundered. The dead bodies of those killed persons whose relations were living in close quarters were passed over to them while other corpses were thrown into the river. The Resident stayed out in the Farah Bakhsh after all these mishaps had come to an end and kept chatting with Naseeruddaulah Bahadur till Kaptān Fateh Ali Khan brought the robes and the royal ornaments for the Nawab.

The Nawab, followed by the Resident, Captain James Paton, Lieut. Shakespear and Syed Iltifat Husain, the Amirul Insha, entered the royal apart-

ments and took his seat on the throne. The Resident and Brigadier Johnstone occupied the chairs on the right. Twentyone shots were fired by each section of the artillery to celebrate the occasion according to the old practice. The Nazar was first presented by the king's eldest son Mirza Amjad Ali Khan and then by Roshanuddaulah Bahadur, Subhan Ali Khan, Doctor Stevenson and Raja Bakhtawar Singh. After this the king with all the pomp and grandeur of royalty moved to Farah Bakhsh on the Takht-i-Rawan.<sup>3</sup> There Ruknuddaulah Bahadur and the king's brothers Ahmad Ali Khan and Mehdi Ali Khan were admitted to the presence and allowed to present the Nazar. Next, the king went inside the 'Mahalsara' where garlands were distributed among those present and the king and the Resident with their own hands garlanded each other. After this the old ceremony of offering 'Itr' as a sign for departure was observed and the Resident left.

After these State affairs had been attended to, the king ordered Munnoo Khan artisan to prepare the grave for the dead king on the other side of the river close to the tomb of Qudsia Begam. Mirza Ali Khan Kotwal was ordered to ask all the shopkeepers and traders of the city to open their shops and give them assurance of peace on behalf of the Government. It was now brought to the notice of His Majesty that Ram Newaz and Bisram Jamadars of the Harkaras

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<sup>3</sup> A throne on which the king is carried when he moves from one place to another.

of 'Kot Ghashti'<sup>4</sup> under state service had posted a company of soldiers at Subhan Ali Khan's house during the course of the riot and therefore Roshanuddaulah Bahadur, in compliance to royal orders, put them into prison. Mirza Ali Vakil and Imam Bakhsh Darogha who had been the leaders of the rebels were also imprisoned.

After this, royal Farmans were issued to the Amils of the different parts of the kingdom to the effect that Qutub Uddin Abun Nasar Suleiman Jah Naseeruddin Hyder died on Saturday night Rabi-ussani 4, and by his right of succession and the will of God, His Majesty, through the help of the company, succeeded him. They were enjoined to perform their administrative duties with great care and diligence, to comply with the orders and submit the reports of their work through Roshanuddaulah Bahadur.

When a quarter of the day was left the 'Naib' (Deputy) was admitted to the presence. After some conversation he went to the Resident and returned to the king after an hour.

At last in the afternoon the dead body of the king was washed in the river close to Mukhaddarae Ulya's<sup>5</sup> palace and carried in royal procession, accompanied by Nawab Roshanuddaulah, Ruknuddaulah, Mehdi Ali Khan, Ahmad Ali Khan, Muhsanuddaulah

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<sup>4</sup> It was their duty to go about the Government offices and courts in order to bring to the king's notice through their superintendent all the important occurrences and news of day-to-day administration.

<sup>5</sup> She was an Anglo-Indian lady. Naseer Uddin Hyder married her soon after his accession and ardently loved her for some time.

Bahadur and other members of the royal family and persons of note. The Resident and Dr. Stevenson also accompanied the funeral procession. Two thousand rupees were distributed in alms and after the funeral prayer, led by the Mujtahid, the body was buried in the newly built Karbala close to the tomb of Qudsia Begam. The people returned after the Fatiha

*Qataa—*

بو نصر قطب دین و سلیمان روزگار  
 در دار خلد رفت ازین دار بے مدار  
 سال وفات خو است چو عقل دقیقه یاب  
 گفتا که از غسق نجم کن شمار  
 ۱۲۵۳ھ

[Bu Nasr Qutub Din Suleiman-e-rozgar (the Solomon of his time) has left this world and gone to the Heavens. When wisdom which is full of practical intelligence tried to find out the year of his death, it was found to be in the words 'Ghasaq-najm' (the darkness of the star).] 1253 A.H.

*Masnavi.*

At last when the sermon was read in the name of Muhammad Ali Shah, Badshah-i-Oudh and the right-ful person crowned, Dabiruddaulah Raja Ratan Singh<sup>6</sup> Hoshiar Jung, the Royal Amirul Insha (the

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<sup>6</sup> He was a Kayestha. His family served the Oudh State for some generations. His grandfather Raja Bhagwan Dass was tutor and Diwan of Asafuddaulah. Ratan Singh himself was a scholar and a poet. His pen-name was "Zakhmi." Among his works was 'Sultanut Tawarikh,' a history of Oudh written in 1832.



highest official of the ministerial department) who was a scholar of Arabic, Persian and English, composed the following 'Sikkah' Verse commemorating the date of the accession and presented it before the king who approved and ordered that the same be stamped on the silver and gold ingots.

The title, 'Abul Fateh Moinuddin Suleimanuz-zaman Nausherwan-i-Adil Muhammad Ali Shah Badshah-i-Oudh,' was inscribed on the Royal seal. A large sum of money was most generously distributed among the members of the 'Mansuria' family who had been reduced to poverty by the neglect of the royal officials. The title of 'Surayya Jah' was conferred by him on his eldest son, who was also made the heir-apparent and the Governor-General was approached through the Resident for according sanction to this. On the Resident's recommendation the sanction was given and on the 4th of Jamaddusani, corresponding to October 4, the robe of heir-apparentship was granted by the king to 'Surayya Jah.'

I now return to the original subject of my thesis from which I have deviated.

While Badshah Begam and Munna Jan were kept imprisoned in the Zard Kothi Munna Jan spent the first two days alone. Later, the Resident touched by his pitiful cries ordered him to be kept with Badshah Begam. They were allowed no furniture except one old mat and a broken cot. The English soldiers kept patrolling so close to them that they were virtually on their heads. A Bhishti boy of tender age named Mirza Ali brought them meals. It was on the third

day that the Begam took some food and drank a little water. The Resident himself visited the place every now and then to look after the captives and always found the Begam reading the Quran and performing other religious practices and looked not the least perturbed by such a change of fortune.<sup>7</sup> It is a pity how this powerful lady lost all wealth and power through the wrong advice of a number of foolish advisers.

After this the Resident supplied ten suits of cloth both male and female and with the help of Syed Iltifat Husain Khan Bahadur put Munna Jan and Badshah Begam in a palanquin and sent them under the guard of the English soldier under Lieut. Shakespear at midnight, on the 8th of Rabiussani, corresponding to July 12 of the same year, to Cawnpore to be kept as prisoners in the custody of General Stevenson in charge of the troops at Cawnpore.

It should be known to the wise that after the trouble had come to an end, the Resident sent a report<sup>8</sup> to the Government at Calcutta and because all that he had done was right it was approved. Consequently a letter written in English was received on Rabiussani

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<sup>7</sup> "The manner, Sir, in which this unfortunate and illustrious lady was carried off, and the insults and indignation heaped upon her after she was their prisoner, are most infamous."

(Knighton's "The Murdered King of Oudh.")

<sup>8</sup> The report is preserved in volume (324) of the "Papers on Oudh," printed in 1838 under the heading, "Memorandum of the events which took place in the night of the 7th, the morning of the 8th of July, 1837, at the palace of His Majesty the King of Oudh." It is of special interest as it was prepared by Lieut. Shakespear and forwarded and countersigned by J. Low.

21, corresponding to July 25, according sanction to the new king's accession and highly commending the arrangements made by him. Twentyone shots were fired from the gun to celebrate this occasion and give expression to the feeling of joy. Then on the 24th and 28th of the month the king himself received letters from the Governor-General and gunshots were fired again.

In compliance with orders from Calcutta the Resident sent to Cawnpore eighteen slave-girls and also Afzal Mahal, the mother of Munna Jan, whom the Begam required to keep company with her. And out of all that was left at Ilmas Bagh eighteen cartloads of the more necessary articles (garments, gold and silver pieces of household furniture) she required were also despatched.

All that was left of her property,—gold and silver articles, horses and elephants,—was confiscated by the king. Strange enough when the Begam inspected the articles brought from Lucknow she eagerly searched for a pet parrot which was so dearly loved by Munna Jan that there were sixteen attendants who simply looked after it. As nobody ever thought that the unhappy Begam would care for the parrot at such an hour of calamity, it was left out, but when they learnt that she wept most bitterly at its loss it was sent to her.

According to the orders from headquarters the two captives were to be sent six miles from Benares to the fort of Chunargarh which had very strong fortifications and a very deep moat and hence on Rajab 4, corresponding to October 5 of the same year, after

all the articles that had been sent for from Lucknow had been received, Munna Jan and the Begam were sent to Chunargarh under the guard of two companies of Tilangas and one regiment of English cavalry. A monthly stipend of Rs. 2,400 was settled on them.

I composed the Tarikh (chronogram) of this event in the following couplets:—

چو منا جان بر تخت سلطنت بنهاد باے خود  
 سیہ بختی ز اوج حشمت و اقبال خارج شد  
 بلوچ دھر بہر یادگاری خامہ رابط  
 رقم زد سال تاریکش کد منا جان خارج شد ۱۲۵۳ھ

When Munna Jan placed his foot on the throne, misfortune emerged from the height of dignity and prosperity. In order to preserve the memory, *Rabit* (the author of the work) composed the Tarikh (Munna Jan was cast off).

Let it be known to the wise that the Begam was above sixty years of age and had lived in the times of her father-in-law, Saadat Ali Khan, her husband, Ghaziuddin Hyder and her son, Naseeruddin Hyder, and knew very well how they obeyed the orders of the Company. The Resident's sympathetic attitude towards her at the time she had a dispute with her son and his exertions to secure orders from the Company's headquarters in her favour, are facts which none will deny. But the Begam misguided by the two plundering Rajputs and the Bhishti and helped by a few wicked persons placed on the throne

a young man who was not of royal blood,<sup>9</sup> only to satisfy her lust for power and wealth and did not fear the evil consequences, with the result that she had to bear such calamities.

If the English army had checked the progress of the rebels having met them half the way or had not allowed them to pass in through the entrance of the royal palace, the common people for want of correct information would have expressed all sorts of doubts and blamed the Resident; but in merely delaying the progress of the rebel army, the Begam's real motives could no more be kept hidden and this has given no grounds for suspicion.

The British justice and their regard for rights gave the throne to the rightful heir and all grandees of the kingdom express gratitude<sup>10</sup> for this.

Thanks to God that I have finished the work. I now intend recording a few uncommon events that have taken place this year.

It should be known to the wise who have love for knowledge and a craving for facts that such uncommon events took place this year that even the aged people have never seen things like these. The year may, therefore, be called the year of accidents.

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<sup>9</sup> Read "A Journey Through the Kingdom of Oudh" by Sleeman (Vol. II, Chap. IV) who takes the opposite view and gives reasons for maintaining that Munna Jan was of royal blood.

<sup>10</sup> "The respectable and peaceable portion of the city, though their sympathies were with the boy, had too much in the property and the honour of their families at stake to aid in any movement in his favour . . . Their security depended upon the success of British troops." (Sleeman's Journey, Vol. II, Chap. IV.)

The first event of this year was that for eight months cholera raged furiously. Anybody who threw out a mouthful of water or had a motion was sure to die before it was possible to get medical aid. Heat was so intense that it affected the vital parts of the body of those who stepped out of their doors. The statistics maintained by the Kotwali shows that there were a hundred deaths every day, the highest proportion being of children and aged men. Women were comparatively less and men in the prime of life were fewer still. More Hindus fell a victim to this epidemic than Muslims and the proportion of seizures and deaths in the lower strata of society was greater than that in the higher. The general trend of the calamity is expressed in the following couplet :—

There can be hardly any doubt about the existence (of God); what doubts there exist are about one's own existence.

Secondly, the rains, which except for one or two torrents, pour in India in the month of 'Shahrivar',<sup>11</sup> and 'Mirdad',<sup>11</sup> did not come this year. Consequently, famines have set in and wheat sells at 12 seers a rupee.

Thirdly, the death of the King of Oudh took place as has been previously mentioned.

Fourthly, King William IV of England died on June 23 (1837 A.D.), corresponding to Rabiul Awwal 19 (1253 A.H.).

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<sup>11</sup> Mirdad and Shahrivar are Shamsi months corresponding to the Hindi months 'Bhadon' and 'Koonwar' respectively.

Fifthly, Sultan Rafi-Ushshan Muhammad Akbar II died in his capital Shah Jahanabad on Jamadussani 27 (1253 A.H.), corresponding to September 28 (1837 A.D.).

May God keep all hale and hearty; particularly I pray for the safety of Lieut. John Shakespear at whose instance I compiled this book.

O God! I have been tyrannical to myself and there can be no atonement of my sins except that you would be pleased to pardon and forgo. Thou art most merciful and a great forgiver.

*Masnavi*—

Thank God that I have completed the work. My pen has depicted the picture of the scene. My veracity is a witness to the fact that I have taken nobody's side; I have written nothing which I have not seen or heard. If there is anything wrong it is because those who informed me gave a wrong information. I have not distorted the facts of this story. I hope that the critics and the wise will overlook my faults and not try to find them out. O God! make the few leaves (of this book) the pupil of the eye of the wise and render it fit to be liked by the expert.





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